

The quiet, low mountains have recently become the scene of diverse cultural development.

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The sound of ringing horns and chanting monks fills the town with a mysterious air.

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"We trained twice a day, but from seven to ten years old, it was just fun, it only became hard work later."

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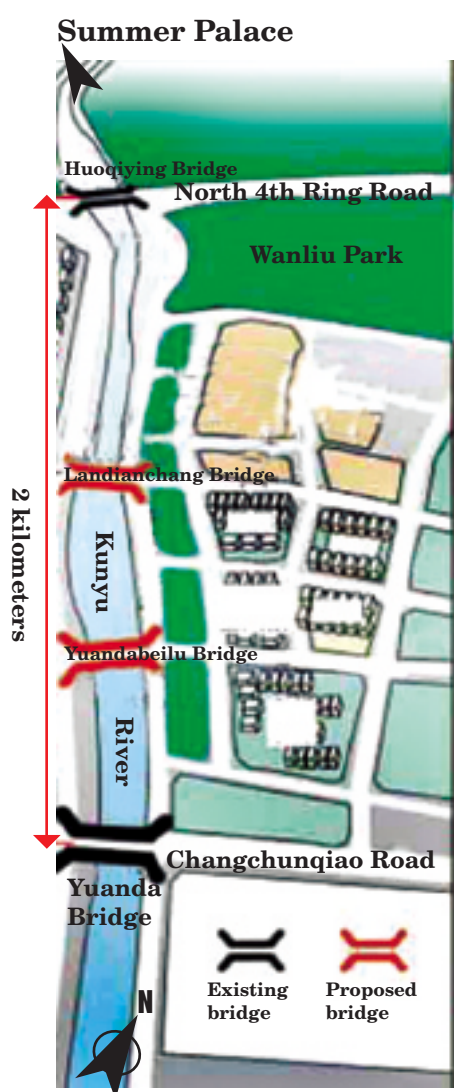
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Fighting for the Kunyu River

'Kids who go to the nearby school could learn how to dodge fast-driving cars from a young age, have classes in the noise and do exercises while breathing exhaust fumes after these two bridges are built!'



Map provided by a resident living in the Kunyu River area.

By Annie Wei

In a city lacking water resources, the Kunyu River area in the northwest of Beijing is something of an oasis. Considered a "green lung" for Beijing, land on either side of the river, which flows from Kunming Lake in the Summer Palace to Yuyantan Park, has become a popular choice for high-end real estate projects.

Ms. Yu, marketing director for Vanland Mansion, a housing project on the east bank of the river, told *Beijing Today* in April last year when the project was still under construction, that the target customers were successful professionals who could afford the price of villas in such pleasant surroundings. Standing in front of her office window, she pointed, "See this way, that's the Fragrant Hills and that's the Fourth Ring Road"

An ancient poem describes this part of Beijing as "the spring breeze turns the willow green, drizzle kisses the blossoming peach flowers, egrets swift on the lake and fish rejoice in the river," comparing the Kunyu River to the scenery of South China.

However, a fight seems to be brewing over the future of this idyllic scene. A report in last Saturday's *Beijing News* detailed claims posted on the bulletin board of the residential area website (<http://house/focus.cn>) on December 20, stating, "The government is planning to build another two four-vehicle bridges over the Kunyu River and a 100-meter bridge approach." The article was accompanied by several design drawings of the bridges. The poster claimed to have got the information from an acquaintance at the Beijing Municipal Commission of Urban Planning.

The article quoted a press release from the Beijing Municipal Committee of Communication as saying that the new bridges were needed because in the past two years, the population in this area had surged, and large scale residential communities and shopping centers, such as Shijicheng and Golden Source Shopping Mall had opened. All these had increased traffic pressure on the third and fourth ring roads.

Walking over Changchun Bridge to the new Lufthansa Center Youyi Shopping Mall, one might think the old poems describe long-gone dreams. The surroundings seem more urban than "eco."

However news of the proposed new bridges has angered many of the residents. More and more people on both sides of the river have been posting com-

ments on the website expressing their anger and concerns about the detrimental effects the bridges will have.

One ironic posting commented, "Kids who go to the nearby school could learn how to dodge fast-driving cars from a young age, have classes in the noise and do exercises while breathing exhaust fumes after these two bridges are built."

"It's OK if they just build a small bridge for pedestrians," wrote one resident.

Another said, "But they are building something much wider!"

If the new bridges were built, there would be at least four 30-meter width bridges in a two-kilometer stretch of the river, and little left of the famous river views.

On December 31 last year, the residents formed a group to protect the river, and attempted to raise their concerns with various government bodies and the media.

Shen Dongkai and James Zhao, two residents who bought apartments along the river area are active participants in the group who have appealed to the government not to build the bridges.

Shen spoke to *Beijing Today* by phone Wednesday, saying he learned about the proposal to build the bridges at the end of last year, "I talked to a person named Zhang Qi, who was supposedly responsible for the project. He confirmed to me that the government has decided to build these two bridges. But now they deny it."

Zhao, who works in the real estate industry, told *Beijing Today* Wednesday that he talked to an engineer surnamed Xie from the Construction Committee of Haidian District on the phone Tuesday afternoon. He learned that the plan is to build not two, but three new bridges, including one that passes just ten meters from the south wall of the Summer Palace.

Later, he faxed a copy of the letter and signatures sent by residents to the Beijing government, the People's Congress of Beijing Municipality and other authorities.

In the letter, the residents listed their objections to the construction of the new bridges over the Kunyu River, pointing out that the bridge near the Summer Palace breaks the commitment to the UN to protect the heritage site. The UN convention stipulates that no new constructions are allowed within two kilometers of a world heritage site that would alter its original appearance.

Shen said, "We left the information on the website and asked other residents to sign their names. Currently, I think there might be over 1,000 signatures from people living in just this community. The same thing is happening in other communities in the area."

Meanwhile, some residents have expressed suspicions that the bridge project is connected to certain big real estate developers, who see in the urbanization of this area a potential for more business opportunities and higher profit margins.

According to the *Beijing News* article, an unnamed source from the Beijing Municipal Commission of Urban Planning was quoted as saying that the planning has not been approved yet; while Ding Baofeng, vice-director of Haidian District Planning Bureau was quoted as saying on January 12 that the bridge proposals were based on general planning, not for any individual or organizations' benefit.

Zhai Baohui, a professor from the Ministry of Construction's Town and Country Planning and Construction Policy Research Center spoke to *Beijing Today* Wednesday. Zhai said, "The damage to the environment is gradual. With increasing disposable income, more and more people feel the environment plays an important role in their life. Many people feel that traffic problems increase with the construction of roads."

City planning projects in China are often on a larger scale than those in developed countries, because of the vast land area. However, they are often started with insufficient or inadequate research. A project such as the construction of a bridge should at least require a survey of nearby residents, as well as a report justifying the need for it to be built, Zhai said.

Zhai took as an example the expansion of Zhongguancun Nandajie; four rows of mature white poplars were chopped down, and young ginkgo trees were planted along the widened road. However it takes many years for a ginkgo tree to grow to a size where it provides a useful degree of shade in summer.

The residents also say that there should be a hearing in which they can participate concerning the new bridges. Holding such hearings are an important process in the new management ideology of local administrations, such as the hearing on ticket price rises at six Beijing parks in 2004. A new law aiming at protecting citizens' legitimate rights and interests was implemented on July



The Kunyu River area has become a magnet for real estate developers. Photos by Li Shuzhuan

1 last year. However, the current City Planning Law, effective since 1990, does not require local city-planning bureaus to hold hearings for such cases.

A Mr. Chen, director of the Information Office of the Beijing Municipal Commission of Urban Planning, who declined to give his full name, said to *Beijing Today* Tuesday that a hearing was not a necessary process in city planning right now. A woman from the office of Beijing Municipal Urban Planning and Design Research Institute told *Beijing Today* Tuesday that they were holding a meeting to discuss the issue, but no feedback has emerged yet.

The basic cause of dissent between the public and some government organs traces back to the original city planning for the Kunyu River area.

In 1996, when the government decided to develop the area, some scholars suggested it should be kept as a nature reserve, Zhai said.

"Ideally, the basic facilities, such as traffic, pipelines and roads should be set up first, when an area is developed. However, the government lacked investment funds, and so let the real estate developers develop the land first. This has resulted in many problems," Zhai pointed out, "But it has become a normal phenomena in planning in many of China's cities."

Zhai said, "This time, the dissent is very meaningful. Obviously, we are in a democratic process. The public care not only about themselves, but more and more about the environment and the communities they live in. The public are looking for transparency in decision-making by government bodies, and the chance to have direct dialogue with the authorities. In the case of the Kunyu River bridges, it's fair for all interested parties to talk face to face. Meanwhile, the media exposure and public concern will push the evolution of city planning laws."

One resident posted the comment on the website, "It's still progress, don't you think? Knowing what's going to happen, why and how, is better than finding out when you are woken up one day by the noise outside your window!"

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Banks Queue to Establish Fund Management Companies

By Chu Meng

Following the publication Sunday of a set rules governing commercial banks' establishment of fund management companies, seven commercial banks have lodged applications for approval to establish fund management companies.

The rules were drawn up jointly by the central People's Bank of China, the China Banking Regulatory Commission (CBRC) and the China Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC).

The banks seeking approval are the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, China Construction Bank, Agricultural Bank of China, Bank of China, Bank of Communications, China Merchants Bank and Shanghai Pudong Development Bank. Pioneering private

lender Minsheng Bank has also been given the go-ahead to apply.

"It is the first tentative touch in the field of universal banking model of China's banks, which has proved to be an inevitable trend of a more reasonable restructuring among the country's banking system and financial market," Li Yang, head of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' Institute of Banking and Finance was quoted as saying in *Beijing Youth Daily* Tuesday.

Commercial banks will be able to set up fund ventures that remain separate from their traditional operations and take on foreign strategic investors. They can create a new mutual fund company, or buy or establish a venture through merger or acquisition. However, Zhang Yuan, director

of the policy and regulation department of the CBRC stated earlier, "We would at first grant licenses to two, or no more than three, applicants."

Analysts believe the Industrial and Commercial Bank and the Bank of Communications will probably be the first to be granted approval.

Shui Pi, senior editor and financial analyst from *China Business Times* told *Beijing Today* Tuesday, "The experiment is expected to create new profit sources for banks, where the income now largely comes from the interest rate gap between loans and deposits. Allowing commercial banks, with their combined saving deposits of 11 trillion yuan (US \$1.33 trillion), to involve in fund management business offers an opportunity

to deal with the country's low direct financing ratio."

Yin Guohong, senior analyst and consultant from China Securities told *Beijing Today* Tuesday, "Though it is bringing fierce competition, the entry of new players in the fund management sector will surely accelerate product innovations, and improve both investment skills and management qualities of the existing fund management firms. Inevitably, some weak players will be cleared out, which would be a good thing for the stronger ones."

Yin said it was true that banks tend to have stronger financial backup and sales channels, while fund management firms currently have to entrust their products to banks.

Imports Accelerate Agricultural Trade Deficit

By Chu Meng

China saw a record \$5.5 billion agricultural trade deficit in 2004, statistics released by the Ministry of Agriculture reveal. The country has turned in to a net importer of agricultural products after joining the World Trade Organization for three years, Xinhua reported Sunday.

"First, the situation arose partly as a result of wider market access to foreign commodities as the country consistently fulfills its commitments to reduce tariff rates on agricultural goods and implemented tariff-rate quotas in international markets," head of the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Engineering Zhu Ming said in the report.

He also pointed out that some European and American countries offered hefty subsidies on agricultural products that distort world market prices, while imbalance in demand and supply has also forced price rises in the domestic markets.

Xu Hongyuan, director of the agricultural trade sector under the ministry's International Co-operation Department, told *China Business Weekly* Monday "The nation saw an annual average agricultural trade surplus of \$4.3 billion between 1995 and 2003, and exports directly absorbed about 16 million farming labor every year. However it is too early to conclude whether the agricultural trade deficit will continue in the coming years"

According to Xu, the deficit comes as no surprise. The impact of China's entry to the WTO began to be felt this year, given an understandable time lag caused by the implementation of WTO rules, showing that China may not be able to sustain a long-standing agricultural trade surplus such as it had before joining the WTO. The average tariffs for agricultural products decreased from 21.2 percent before WTO accession to 16.8 percent by the end of last year. It will be further lowered as the country opens the sector wider, he said.

Chen Xiwen, deputy director of the Office of Central Financial Work leading group said at a press conference on January 31 that the agricultural trade deficit in the first seven months of 2004 is also due to an animal products trade deficit in this period. The bird flu epidemic that occurred earlier in the year and the ever-growing technical barriers imposed on Chinese agricultural products from Europe and America have set back Chinese exports

Compared with the first half of 2003, China imported 4.11 million tons of grain, 1.8 times more.

Feng Xingyuan, of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' Rural Development Institute told *Beijing Today* Wednesday, "China never relies on grain imports for its food security. Grain imports will represent no more than 5 percent of China's annual grain consumption. Moreover, it is a rational choice for China to import more land-intensive agricultural products, such as high quality wheat, in which China is not competitive, by using its rich foreign exchange reserve."



Former US President Bill Clinton signed an agreement with vice-minister of health, Gao Qiang, in Beijing yesterday to provide a year's supply of AIDS drugs to 200 Chinese children.
Xinhua Photo

Licensing Restrictions Relaxed for Handset Makers

By Chu Meng

A new approval system for the issuance of new licenses for mobile phone manufacturing was released by the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) last Saturday. Under the new system, admission standards for licensing manufacturers, which have been in place for six years, have been significantly relaxed.

The new approval system elaborates nine key items for domestic mobile phone manufacturers.

These include a requirement

that the total registered capital of applicants should be no less than 200 million yuan; that applicants must establish an independent research and development center; and that infrastructure producers of 2G (second generation) and 3G mobile phones should apply directly to relevant provincial development and reform departments before lodging an application at the national level.

According to a *Beijing Youth Daily* report on Tuesday, more than ten domestic brands, including Sky-

worth, Huawei and Changhong, have submitted applications to the NDRC. Analysts predict that the Ministry of Information Industry (MII) will issue no more than 10 new licences.

Mobile phone manufacturing licenses were first issued according to the December 31, 1998 regulation of the MII, as a means of ensuring the healthy development of the sector. Since then, the ministry has granted 29 GSM mobile phone manufacturing licenses and 20 CDMA licenses to 37 manufacturers by the end of June 2004.

A total of 26 of these manufacturers are foreign companies, while eight of them are privately owned domestic enterprises.

International Home Hostels to Open

By Xu Chuanmei

Chaoyang Tourist Bureau last week issued a draft of Beijing's first standards for evaluating home hostel accommodation for international tourists. The standards will be trialed in Chaoyang District's Gaobeidian, a popular tourist destination on the eastern outskirts of the city.

The standards have detailed stipulations. Working staff should be over 18 years old and capable of holding a basic conversation in English. They should have a separate kitchen, dining-room and bathroom for guests, and owners should not share rooms with guests. The decor of guest rooms should have local features.

Safety and cleanness were emphasized by the Beijing Tourism Administration (BTA), which is overseeing the scheme, and hospitality industry professionals are providing hosting families with necessary training. "Recently many professionals have come to train us, and officials from the BTA are inspecting our work," a woman surnamed Lin told *The First*.

Local style food will feature on the menu for guests and those wanting to experience the daily life of local families can even help prepare meals, together with the hosting families.

Tax Certificates Required When Transferring Assets Abroad

By Xu Chuanmei

Individuals who wish to transfer abroad assets worth over 150,000 yuan (\$18,000) are now required to provide a tax certificate, according to a notice issued by the State Administration of Taxation (SAT) and the State Administration of Foreign Exchange (SAFE). The regulation is aimed at preventing a drain on taxes.

Taxation bureaus at or above county level are authorized to issue tax certificates. Individuals should apply to the

local taxation bureau of the administrative area where his or her income was earned or the assets were obtained. Providing the applicant submits all the required documents, the bureau should issue the tax certificate within 15 working days, the notice says.

Applicants who have already received tax vouchers can submit them directly to the administrative agency of foreign exchange, without having to apply to the taxation agency for a certificate.

Restrictions Relaxed on Foreign Leasing Companies

By Qiu Jiaoning

A new regulation to take effect from March 5 will allow foreign investors to deal with leasing and financial leasing in terms of wholly foreign-owned companies, according to an announcement by the Ministry of Commerce last Friday.

In line with China's commitments to the WTO, the minimum capital input of a foreign leasing or financial leasing investor is reduced to \$5 million. Besides, there will be no registered capital floor for foreign leasing companies and the minimum registered capital of a foreign financial leasing company will be reduced from \$20 million to \$10 million.

Under the regulation, local authorities

will be granted the power to accept and approve a foreign leasing company in terms of a limited liability company.

In order to keep effective watch on the leasing industry, financing leasing companies are required to submit annual business and finance reports to the Ministry of Commerce before March 31.

According to the Ministry of Commerce, many foreign enterprises, including banks, specialized leasing companies and manufacturing enterprises, have applied to set up wholly-owned leasing companies in China. So far, China has 39 foreign-funded leasing companies with trade volume totaling about \$1.6 billion in 2004.

Security Investors Protection Fund To Be Launched

By Sun Yongjian

A statement issued by the China Securities Regulatory Commission and the Ministry of Finance Sunday announced that a Security Investors Protection Fund is to be established in the near future.

According to the statement, when bonds such as stocks and convertible bonds are publicly offered, the investors' pur-

chasing fund will be frozen in the accounts from three months to one year, and the interest on the frozen funds must be saved into one of the special accounts in the Shanghai or Shenzhen Exchanges.

Before the fund is established, the exchanges must hand in the interest on the frozen fund to the special government account.

Dongcheng Digitalizes Urban Management

By Chu Meng

Citizens in Dongcheng District now have a hotline to report problems such as missing manhole covers and pollution. The Urban Digital Management System, launched last Sunday, promises to solve such problems within 13.5 working hours of their being reported through a digitalized network from the center.

With a total area

of 25.4 square kilometers, including 592 streets, the district is divided into 1,652 digital network units, 10,000 square meters each. In this way, all of the public facilities in the network can be coded with a distinguishing ID number. There are 300 supervisors exclusively in charge of a certain number of units. The hotline number is 13910001000.

Beijing to Export Education

By Xu Chuanmei

The Beijing government has started encouraging qualified schools to operate overseas. The city's nine key secondary schools, including Huiwen Middle School, Capital Normal University Middle School, and Renmin University Middle School, will be the first to participate in the scheme, in a joint pilot project.

In the last two

Shanda's Sina Share Purchase: Cooperation or Hostile takeover?

By Wang Shuang

Shanda Interactive Entertainment, China's leading online gaming company, on February 10 bought a 19.5 percent stake in Sina, making it the largest single shareholder in China's top Internet portal firm. But the action went unknown to Sina and the public until it was revealed on February 18.

The surprise move, which some have called a hostile takeover, could pave the way for Shanda to assume control of Sina and result in the significant transformation of China's fast-growing and fiercely competitive online portal sector.

Sina President and CEO Wang Yan since sent a letter to all company staff on behalf of management explaining that Sina was listed on America's Nasdaq index in the Cayman Islands (Cayman), putting it under the supervision of Cayman corporate law and US federal securities law. That meant that unlike under Chinese law, Shanda had no substantial control over the portal even as its largest shareholder, and Sina would continue to be run



Shanda CEO Chen Tianqiao

Sina CEO and President Wang Yan

by a board of directors selected by all shareholders and operated by managers appointed directly by the board, Wang wrote.

He also said that contrary to rumor, no Sina managers had sold stocks or options before the Shanda purchase.

The portal firm has been more

tight-lipped towards the general public and has not posted an official statements on the matter on its popular homepage. When asked by *Beijing Today* whether Sina saw Shanda's move as a hostile takeover, Sina media coordinator Cai Jinqing replied, "It's not quite clear at present. We'll have to

wait and see."

But a recent Sina move indicates the company is not taking any chances. It announced on Tuesday it was introducing a "poison pill" to thwart its Nasdaq-listed rival though a plan that would effectively prevent any third party from purchasing stocks in the open market without the approval of the board and shareholders.

Cai said by using the plan, more details about which have not been disclosed, Sina would get more time to handle the matter, but he admitted it was too early to know if someone from Shanda would enter Sina's board.

Shanda CEO Chen Tianqiao arrived in Beijing at noon on Wednesday, but his agenda was unknown, Sina said. There are rumors that Chen is in town to meet with Sina investors about the purchase, but Shanda has been silent on the issue.

That has left the domestic media spinning out reams of conjecture. What would come from the merger of China's top online gaming company and top Internet portal? The answer seems far from clear at this point.

Lenovo Shaken by GE Switch to Dell from IBM

By Chu Meng

A move by General Electric (GE) has shown some negative light on Chinese computer maker Lenovo's recent high-profile purchase of IBM's personal computing division. Lenovo has acknowledged that GE, a major IBM client, decided to switch its PC procurements to rival Dell.

"GE's switch of its PC purchases from IBM to Dell indeed happened, however it happened months before Lenovo's acquisition of IBM's PC unit," Li Feng, assistant to Lenovo's president said in a public statement last Saturday, *Beijing Youth Daily* reported.

Li clarified GE made the decision last fall, before Lenovo signed its deal with IBM in December.

Yet prospects for the acquisition were still promising, she added. A recent survey by IBM showed around 90 percent of its long-term customers were positive about Lenovo's take-over.

Moreover, the company would still have chances to work with GE, Li said. "Both Lenovo and GE are members of the Olympic partnership program. As a matter of fact, we are attempting multi-lateral cooperation based upon the Olympic economic platform."

US-based *Business Week* first reported on February 15 that GE dropped IBM late last year to go exclusively with Dell for desktop and notebook computers because of its lower prices. The news resulted in a sharp drop in Lenovo's stock price the same day.

Within China, Lenovo's deal has always had more supporters than critics.

Fang Xingdong, chairman of blogchina.com and a well-known IT critic said on his website, "This is a magnificent acquisition. The new Lenovo will become a major global player in the PC industry overnight instead of struggling for generations. Lenovo is getting IBM's first-rate products, technology, brands, market, channels and management."



China's First ETF Fund Kicked Off

Huaxia Fund Management Co. opened the Chinese mainland's first index exchange-traded fund on February 23. The new fund, called the Shanghai Stock Exchange 50ETF, is listed on the Shanghai Stock Exchange.

Geng Liang, CEO of the Shanghai Stock Exchange (left) and Fang Yonghong, general manager and vice-chairman of Huaxia Fund Management Co. (right), attended the opening ceremony.

Photo by Oriental Morning Post

Hainan Airlines Tarred in Financial Scandal

By Sun Yongjian

Domestic carrier Hainan Airlines has been mired in deep trouble since a government watchdog found the company violated national law in a 440 million yuan transaction with a related company, according to a statement released by its listed subsidiary on the website of the Shanghai Stock Exchange on January 31.

That subsidiary, Hainan Airlines Shareholding, said the Hainan branch of the China Securities Regulatory Commission had found in a recent investigation that the company's records showed a transaction with Shaanxi Xinyuan Commercial & Trade Co. worth 440 million yuan. But Hainan Airlines failed to disclose the transaction in its annual report.

A source from the company's board of directors who asked to go unnamed told *Beijing Today* on Tuesday that the matter had not led to any economic losses for the carrier and its fiscal situation was sound.

"The company has violated rules of information disclosure for listed companies," the CSRC previously charged in its investigation report, according to Haihang Shareholding's announcement. But that statement stressed Hainan Airlines had already withdrawn all the transaction funds from Shaanxi Xinyuan.

The CSRC's investigation could have unfavorable effect on one of the carrier's strategic targets, the formation of a new domestic airline group based on its four subsidiaries, *Shang-*

hai Securities reported on February 1. That airline would be centered in Beijing and could rank as the fourth largest carrier in China.

Other serious problems regarding the company's accounting and corporate governance structure were uncovered in the CSRC Hainan branch's investigation, the carrier admitted.

Among those were major account settlement problems, confirming market rumors that the company amassed 1.3 billion yuan in deficits in 2003.

Some 40 million yuan of expenses incurred from 1998 to 2002 were not revealed in the listed subsidiary's annual reports and in 2002, 26.85 million yuan of false profit claims were uncovered, it said.

Haier Named China's Top Company for Third Straight Year

By Sun Yongjian

Household appliance maker Haier Group has been voted China's top company for overall leadership for the third consecutive year in the Asian Wall Street Journal 200 (AWSJ 200), according to Monday's *Asian Wall Street Journal*.

The annual leadership survey, formerly known as Review 200, polled the views of the region's top executives on more than 624 multinational and

local companies across the Asia Pacific region. They were asked for their opinions of the financial and corporate performances of those companies and Asia's business outlook.

Haier, which early this year pledged to become the world's best-selling refrigerator brand by the end of 2005, also emerged as the No. 1 company in the China survey for "high quality products and services," "good company reputation," "long-term vision" and

"innovativeness in responding to customer needs."

In both overall leadership and reputation, it beat computer giant Lenovo Group and China's biggest steel manufacturer, Shanghai Baosteel Group, which were ranked second and third.

Consumer-electronics maker TCL Corp and China Mobile Communications Group made it into the top 10 for overall leadership for the first time.

BOC Recruits Senior Risk Expert

By Sun Yongjian

Bank of China (BOC) has employed an expert from HSBC to take the position of credit risk supervisor, marking the first time a domestic state-owned bank has hired international personnel to a leading position with actual power, the bank announced in a statement on its Web site on Monday.

Lonnie Counn had already taken the position, the bank said. Counn, who had 30 years of experience in credit risk administration, previously worked at Latin America Group, Marine Midland Baband and HSBC's US and Hong Kong branches, it said.

Following a probationary period of up to one year, BOC would sign a permanent contract with Counn if everything went well, a bank spokesman told *Beijing Today* on Tuesday.

BP Setting Up New Petrochem JV with Dongfeng

By Wang Shuang

Global oil giant BP Company of Britain has invested 120 million yuan to establish a new joint venture company, Dongfeng Castrol Oil Co., with Chinese firm Dongfeng Automobile Co. in the Wuhan Economic and Technological Development Zone in Hubei Province.

The two sides hold equal shares of the venture, which has 80 million in registered capital. The new company's key businesses are production and sale of chemical products.

CSCEC Picked to Build New CCTV Center

By Sun Yongjian

China State Construction Engineering Corp (CSCEC) has won the tender for the contract to build China Central Television's ultra-modern new headquarters. Construction is slated to start on May 8, according to a CSCEC news release from Monday.

The CCTV building, to be located in Beijing's Central Business District (CBD), had a contracted value of 4.65 billion yuan, the release said.

The project, designed by famed Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas, is scheduled to be completed in January 2009.

COSCO Signs Deal for New Mega-ships

By Chu Meng

China Ocean Shipping (Group) Co. (COSCO) and Hyundai Heavy Industries Corp signed a contract for the construction of four 10,000 twentyfoot equivalent unit (TEU) super containerhips in Beijing last Friday.

The first of the four vessels, expected to be the largest of its kind ever built in terms of slot capacity, is scheduled to be delivered in 2007. Through the deal, COSCO's container fleet should reach 800,000 TEU in terms of slot capacity in 2010, making the company one of the leading and most competitive liner shipping operators in the world.

Foreign Capital Makes First Flow to Domestic Insurance Manager

By Sun Yongjian

Suisse Reinsurance Company Assets Management (Asia) Co. has received approval from the China Insurance Regulating Commission (CIRC) to purchase a 10 percent stake in China Reinsurance Assets Management Co. It was the first time a foreign firm was allowed to buy a piece of a domestic insurance assets management company, *China Business News* reported on Monday.

The equities structure of China Reinsurance Assets Management Co. will be shared by six companies. The largest shareholder will be China Reinsurance (Group) Company, with a majority 50.1 percent stake, followed by Suisse Reinsurance, China Property and Casualty Co., China Life Reinsurance Co. and Fuxi Investment Holding Co.



Steve Schneider, CEO of GE Asia Pacific and Wang Yitao, executive vice president of the Chinese Skating Association (center) at the signing ceremony.

Photo by Wei Tong

GE Backing Chinese Figure Skaters

By Sun Ming

General Electric (GE) signed an agreement yesterday in Beijing to become the official sponsor of China's national figure skating team.

GE agreed to fully support the Chinese team to prepare for and compete at the upcoming 2006 Olympic Winter Games in Torino, Italy in a deal that starts immediately and runs through April 2006. Through the agreement, GE became the first multinational company to sponsor a Chinese national winter sports team.

Chinese figure skaters have won many awards over the years, including world championships, but the national team has yet to score a gold medal at a winter Olympic Games.

Japan Economy Shrinks Further

Tokyo, February 16 (Reuters) – Japan’s economy shrank for a third straight quarter in the last three months of 2004 as export growth and personal consumption weakened, marking the country’s fourth recession in less than a decade.

Gross domestic product (GDP) fell 0.1 percent in real, or price-adjusted, terms in October-December, worse than the forecast 0.1 percent growth and confirming that the strength of Japan’s latest recovery has waned since it started two years ago. On an annualized basis, Japan’s GDP shrank a real 0.5 percent in the fourth quarter, worse than a median market forecast of 0.5 percent growth, the government data showed on Wednesday.

The common definition of

recession – two straight quarters of contraction – was only met because July-September figures were revised on Wednesday to show a 0.3 percent fall instead of an initial reading for 0.1 percent growth. The economy contracted 0.2 percent in April-June.

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi maintained the government’s view that the recovery remained intact in the bigger scheme of things, a view shared by Economics Minister Heizo Takenaka.

Analyst’s Take:

To say the Japanese economy is in recession is a little too strong. The economy is likely to post a moderate recovery in the fiscal year 2005.

Japan should be able to get back on track in the coming months and gather steam from

around the mid-year, as corporate capital spending has been rising gradually and the falls in consumption during the October-December period were largely due to special factors.

Corporate capital investment activities appear to be robust, meaning Japanese corporations didn’t stop investing, which should be a good sign that Japan is still on a path to recovery. In addition, private consumption spending in 2004 picked up and took on the strongest growth momentum during the past seven years, suggesting Japanese consumers were not aware of any recession. Also, many young Japanese people have more than one job, which can increase income and consumption growth. However, this doesn’t necessarily show up in the statistics.

On the back of steady growth in

the US and Asian economies, Japanese exports have no reason to stop increasing with such a good overseas market environment. For instance, Japan has gained over 30 percent of the auto market in the US, where there is strong demand for Japan’s advanced manufacturing products.

Japan has adjusted its statistical methods for real GDP and worked on a different basis that includes more than just GDP data since the July-September quarter. The new method can better tell economic situations as they really are, but is also one of the technical factors in the negative GDP figure.

– Liu Junhong, associate research fellow of the Institute of Japanese Studies at the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (Qiu Jiaoning)

New EU Laws Protect Air Passengers’ Rights

Brussels, February 17 (AP) – European Union laws came into force Thursday to offer airline passengers better compensation if their flights are overbooked, canceled or subjected to long delays.

Consumer groups have backed the new rules, which the EU hopes will force airlines to improve the quality of service. However airlines say they’ll be forced to push up ticket prices to cover the compensation claims and have threatened legal action.

The airlines will have to pay hefty reimbursements to any passenger with a confirmed ticket who gets bumped off a flight. The fines can reach euro600 (US\$780) for long-haul flights, double the limit set in 1991.

In 2002, approximately 250,000 passengers in Europe were refused boarding due to overbooking.

Similar compensation will be offered if a flight is canceled and the airline is deemed responsible. That will not apply if more than two weeks’ notice is given, or alternative flights are offered at the same time.

The rules apply to all flights taking off from airports within the EU and flights into the 25-EU nations by European airlines.

Analyst’s Take:

The new rules will protect airline passengers’ legal rights. They will also have a direct impact on the international air carrier liability system and clarify legislation for the airline industry.

The current international convention only stipulates relief measures for passengers’ rights and interests when their flights cause injuries and deaths or delay. But it doesn’t cover the protection measures when flights are overbooked or canceled. Although there are regulations on these cases in some countries’ domestic laws, they are usually lacking in feasibility. The new rules give overall consideration to these situations.

All EU-based airlines will have to adhere to the new rules applying to all scheduled and charter flights. According to the new rules, airlines using European airports will now have to pay higher compensation to passengers in case of delays or cancellations. The new compensation package has been introduced in order to stop airlines from deliberately over-booking flights.

It is inevitable that the new rules will increase the burdens on carriers. Such financial burdens are expected to impel the carriers to make greater efforts in preventing their flights from being overbooked, canceled or delayed. This can only be achieved with both the carriers’ efforts and assistance from the authorities.

– Dong Nianqing, professor from the Civil Aviation Management Institute of China (Qiu Jiaoning)



Made in Brazil

A logo for Brazil-made products is published at a meeting of industrialists and businessmen in Rio De Janeiro Monday. The logo will be used for Brazil’s agricultural exports and tourism products.

Xinhua Photo

South Korea’s Foreign Reserves Up

Seoul, February 17 (Asia Pulse) – South Korea’s foreign exchange reserves surpassed the US\$200-billion mark for the first time, thanks to a rise in investment profits, a central bank report showed Thursday.

The country’s foreign reserves came to a record \$200.25 billion as of Tuesday, up \$550 million from the end of January, the Bank of Korea (BOK) said in the report.

The central bank attributed the surge to a rise in investment profits. February’s profits were especially bolstered, as most of the US Treasuries pay interest in February, May, August and November, the BOK said.

The investment profits have been the main reason behind a boost in the country’s foreign reserves in recent months.

The foreign reserves rose by \$633 million to \$199.7 billion at the end of January from a month earlier, thanks to a rise in investment profits.

The profits have also been enough to prevent any fall in the reserves from the sliding dollar

value of non-dollar assets.

The dollar value of non-dollar assets in the country’s foreign reserves has been sliding moderately in recent months, due to the greenback’s ascent against the euro and other currencies.

However, the February rise was far smaller than in November, when the reserves soared by a monthly record of \$14.21 billion to \$192.6 billion.

Local Report:

The sharp increase of South Korea’s foreign exchange reserves has mainly stemmed from the reform of its banking system, improvement of international payments and the weakness of the dollar.

In order to stand up to the local currency’s appreciating pressures against the dollar and ensure export earnings, South Korea’s foreign exchange authorities bought a huge amount of dollars. Otherwise the Korean currency’s appreciation against the greenback would make Korean products more expensive overseas and hurt export-

ers’ profitability.

In many financial experts’ opinion, the country’s foreign exchange is excessive now, while the government doesn’t think so. As a result, such debates are heating up.

Foreign exchange reserves can improve the country’s capability in international financing and payment so as to fend off financial risks and restrain finance speculation. However, it may bring about some negative effects. For instance, most of the country’s foreign exchange reserves are US dollars but these will fall in value if the US dollar continues to slide.

As matters stand, the South Korean government is inclined to keep fat foreign exchange reserves to fend off financial risks. If the US dollar runs into trouble, the country’s finance regulator may intervene in the currency market to prevent the local currency from appreciating too much.

– Xinhua News Agency, February 20, 2005 (Qiu Jiaoning)

Bush, EU Strain for Common Ground

Brussels, February 21 (Dow Jones) – During George W. Bush’s first term, trade between the US and Europe represented a quiet success story. Even as the two sides diverged over the Middle East and terrorism, they worked well together to revive ailing global market-opening talks and resolve irritants that could have cut the \$2.5 trillion in annual transatlantic trade – about 40% of total global commerce.

Tensions simmer over Europe’s attempts to woo Iran and China through trade, as well as over aircraft subsidies to Airbus and Boeing Co, and over how to wrap up global trade talks.

Much of Bush’s agenda in Brussels – one of his stops on this week’s European tour – will be devoted to these questions, though few expect any concrete breakthroughs. In particular, the two sides say they will avoid discussing the deadlocked aircraft negotiations, as there is no deal in sight for now. Instead, the EU is sending a delegation to Washington this week for more talks.

European officials say they will lobby Bush at Tuesday’s dinner to give his tacit support of talks with Iran, suggesting that

otherwise he risks causing their collapse. The US president will warn against searching for commercial advantage with the large Iranian oil industry and burgeoning domestic market.

As leverage, both the EU and the US need to confront the main stumbling block on their own doorstep: farm subsidies. The EU has pledged to end export subsidies, which allow it to dump cheap food on global markets, and it wants the US to follow suit. Yet in the US, rural voters played a large part in handing Bush his second term.

Any conflict over global negotiations could spill over into the EU and US’s efforts to knock down their own trade barriers, a process dubbed the Transatlantic Business Dialogue. Under the dialogue, the two have committed to recognizing each others’ regulation of financial services and intellectual property, as well as sharing recognition of professional qualifications. While business loves the plan, Europeans suggest they will be cautious; otherwise, they say India, Brazil and their friends could resent the EU and US giving each other preferential treatment.

Alcatel, Microsoft Start Internet TV

Paris, February 22 (AFP) – The French telecommunications equipment maker Alcatel and US software giant Microsoft announced a partnership to develop software to deliver Internet-based television services to broadband operators worldwide.

“It will join Alcatel’s expertise in high-speed networks with Microsoft’s software expertise in interface solutions,” Alcatel director of development Marc Jalabert told a press conference.

He said the tie-up would also promote innovations in ADSL or cable-based television platforms.

Eric Boustouller, Microsoft France chief executive, said the

Alcatel/Microsoft cooperation would target fixed telephone operators in order to “speed up the widespread delivery of the Internet-television services offered” by broadband operators.

Alcatel and Microsoft have been discussing the project since 2003 and have been working with 30 operators worldwide but have signed an agreement with only one, SBC Communications of the United States.

Microsoft last year signed a \$400 million (302.2-million-euro), 10-year pact with SBC to provide television services using Microsoft’s TV Internet Protocol Television Edition software.

Boeing Sells Commercial Aircraft Plants

Wichita, February 23 (AP) – Boeing Co. is moving closer to its goal of design and final assembly for its commercial jets, agreeing to sell aircraft assembly plants in Kansas and Oklahoma to a Canadian investment group that hopes to boost demand for the facilities’ services with business from smaller airplane makers.

Twin deals announced Tuesday by the Chicago-based aerospace giant will add \$1.6 billion cash to company coffers.

In the first, Toronto-based Onex Corp. agreed to buy Boeing’s massive aircraft plant in Wichita, Kan., plus other work sites in Tulsa and McAlester, Okla., for \$900 million cash and the assumption of \$300

million debt.

Tuesday’s announcement ended more than a year of speculation about the future of the Chicago-based aerospace giant, which wants to focus on design and final assembly, leaving the development of components and other aircraft pieces to others.

In the second deal, Boeing said it would sell its Rocketdyne rocket engine subsidiary to United Technologies Corp., parent of jet-engine maker Pratt & Whitney, for about \$700 million cash. Canoga Park, Calif.-based Rocketdyne has sites and assets in California, Alabama, Mississippi and Florida and 3,000 employees.

NTT DoCoMo Takes on Trains

Tokyo, February 22 (AFP) – NTT DoCoMo, Japan’s top mobile phone carrier, said it and East Japan Railway (JR East) will launch a hi-tech handset service designed to allow hassle-free train rides from January 2006.

The new service called ‘Mobile Suica’ will be backed by Sony’s chipmaking technology and combine DoCoMo’s i-mode FeliCa smart-card handset and Suica, JR East’s IC-based train pass.

The companies expect one million users in the first year.

Mobile Suica will be used initially in the Tokyo metropolitan area, enabling customers to recharge stored fares and purchase commuter passes anytime and anywhere.



AFP Photo

The user can check the balance of stored fare on the screen of the handset.

“At the moment, the service is limited to the metropolitan area but if we receive requests from other JR group companies, I’d like to cooperate,” Mutsutake Otsuka, chief executive of East Japan Railway, told reporters.

Warner Bros. to Sell Discounted DVDs in China

New York, February 23 (Reuters) – Time Warner Inc.’s Warner Bros. Entertainment will release more than 125 movies on DVD in China at discounted prices in an effort to offset piracy losses, the Wall Street Journal reported on Wednesday.

The newspaper said the movie studio will release the below-market priced DVDs this year to retailers in China in hopes that

they will compete well enough with bootlegged DVDs to offset losses caused by piracy.

“It’s pretty daunting going into that market to release a legitimate product,” the newspaper quotes Warner Bros. chairman and chief executive Barry Meyer as saying. “But we really think if we can get in there, we can be a part of the solution and not the problem.”

Residents Blame Mobile Phone Boosters for Cancer Cases

By Zhou Ying

Five mobile phone signal boosters have been causing cancer among residents of an apartment building in Xuanwu District, some people living in the structure claimed in a letter sent to the local government before Spring Festival.

At least 25 residents have been diagnosed with cancer since moving into the building in 1991 and

12 have died, *Beijing News* reported last Thursday.

"I worked with some other residents to look into the matter before Spring Festival and we found nearby apartments did not have such strangely high numbers of cancer cases," Mr. Li, a teacher from the Capital University of Medical Sciences was quoted as saying. "We drew the conclusion that the incidents must have something to do with our build-

ing's environment."

Li said he and some others determined the five mobile phone signal boosters that stand atop the building were to blame.

The decision to keep or move the accused boosters rested with the Capital University of Medical Sciences, which owned the building, explained Wu Lianshi, director of the community administration association.

But since going public with the

letter of accusation, residents at the building have been surprisingly mum on the subject. When *Beijing Today* went to talk to people there on Monday, even those who had signed the letter refused to talk and a guard on post at the main door kept all strangers from entering.

A Mr. Qing, who refused to give his full name, said he had heard the boosters would be dismantled, but declined to provide more details.

Capital Free of Dangerous Dye

By Liu Zhaoxi

Product quality inspectors throughout China have in recent days been on the lookout for Sudan I, a carcinogenic synthetic red dye that has tainted hundreds of food products in the UK.

The Beijing Inspection and Quarantine Bureau told the media on Wednesday that no food containing Sudan I had been found imported into the city.

Meanwhile, the State Administration for Quality Supervision and Inspection and Quarantine had banned imports of any foods containing the carcinogenic substance and began screening foods coming in from the European Union, *China Daily* reported on Thursday.

The UK's Food Standards Agency first released a list of products contaminated with the illegal dye earlier this month and started recalling the products, including pork sausages, vegetable soup and barbecue sauce, from its market. The list has since been updated and by Tuesday consisted of 428 affected food products.

Makers of those products, including Heinz and Unilever, have announced none of their listed goods were sold in China, *China Daily* said.

Old Building Declared Danger Zone

By Li Ruifen

Residents of the Fusuijing building, reputedly the most dangerous structure in Beijing, began moving out last Friday, *The First* reported on Monday.

The people living in the residential structure would receive 8,000 yuan per square meter in compensation as well as one-time payments of another 25,000 yuan for leaving by March 19, a local government official was quoted as saying. However, most residents have struggled to find new homes to move into and are staying put for the time being until they do, the newspaper said.

The Fusuijing building, which stands near Baitasi temple, was ranked as having the most severe safety problems in a study conducted last year in Beijing. Built in 1958, the structure currently is home to 364 families with a total 995 residents, and another 165 rooms are occupied by six organizations.

Like many older complexes, apartments in the building were built without private kitchens or toilets, as such facilities are shared by floor. Looking for a little space, many residents have set up temporary cooking areas in the building's corridors, and the assembled gas tanks, stoves and assorted sundries have rendered the entire place a massive fire hazard, which was recognized as early as 1993.

The local government has not announced what will be done with the old building once everyone moves out.



The Fusuijing building



Photo by Wang Xiaoxi

Flying High Flags of Tradition

By Li Ruifen

Starting with the deafening sound of firecrackers, drums and gongs, Beijing's Mentougou District held its annual Gufan Fair on Wednesday and Thursday to mark the end of traditional Spring Festival celebrations.

The Gufan fair, named after ancient flags, is a unique Mentougou tradition held on the fifteenth and sixteenth days of the new lunar

year, the main purpose of which is to praise and worship heaven. Among many people in the district, it is often even more popular than Spring Festival itself.

For the start of the event, scores of flags embroidered with colorful patterns and characters were marched from surrounding areas to the entrance to Qianjun village and then on to the village's western edge to the accompani-

ment of Gufan music.

That ancient musical style is the key to the Gufan Fair and noted for its aged musical instruments and musicians. Instead of fading into memory, this "living musical fossil" has survived the modern age thanks to more than 20 years of efforts to collect, record and organize Gufan music by personnel from the Mentougou District government.

Radio DJ Talks Criminal into Confession

By Zhou Ying

A criminal wanted by authorities for 12 years turned himself into the police last Thursday in Beijing after being convinced to do so by a talk show host on China National Radio, *Beijing News* reported Saturday.

Radio hostess Xiang Fei received a strange short message by cell phone on February 4 from a man in Foshan, Shandong Province, who identified himself as Gu Haijun, a wanted criminal at large. Gu said he wanted Xiang's help.

The radio personality was surprised, but maintained contact with Gu while trying to confirm he was who he said he was.

"To keep him from getting suspicious, I just talked with him about nor-



Xiang Fei and Gu Photo by Chang Liang

mal things. But I always had to wait for him to call, I couldn't reach him because he kept changing his phone number," Xiang told the newspaper.

Eventually, the two came to trust each other, she said. "I didn't want to directly pressure him into giving himself up. Instead, I just kept talking

about his wife and children and he even broke into tears on the phone."

Gu called again on February 16 to tell Xiang he was taking a train to Beijing to see her. "He said he hoped I could accompany him to the police station. I immediately contacted the police after the call," Xiang recalled.

"The stress in my mind finally went away when I saw the police," Gu told *Beijing News*. "I really appreciate what [Xiang] did for me, I couldn't take being on the run anymore."

Gu had been wanted for killing a person in a public bathhouse after an argument over a pair of slippers in 1993, said a source from the public security bureau of Xicheng District.

Graduate Student Charged with Peddling Child Porn

By Liu Zhaoxi

A graduate student at a pediatric medical research institute charged with selling pornographic materials involving children faced trial at the Dongcheng District court on Tuesday.

The suspect, 27-year-old Cui Chaohua, started graduate school in 2002 to pursue a master's degree in pediatric medicine. Cui later opened a movie website to make some money and then switched to pornographic content to increase his profits, the public prosecutor told the court.

Using false identification, Cui opened several bank accounts and rented a server in the summer of 2003. He then began to collect pornographic images and films, mostly involving young girls, and posted them on his website, Aiyou Tiandi, in December. Users of the site could download the materials or receive them through the mail after transferring fee payments to one of the Gu's accounts.

Beijing police discovered the illegal website last March and arrested Cui soon after. By the time he was apprehended, he had sold more than 100 discs to earn more than 5,000 yuan, the prosecutor said.

Before the court, Cui admitted to selling video disks with pornographic content on his website and to "violating the law and social ethics." He said he was motivated to earn extra cash because his 600-yuan monthly stipend was not enough to support himself, *The Mirror* newspaper reported.

Cui's family and friends were present at the trial and said he was a generally well-behaved person. The court has yet to release its verdict.

Guard Beaten by Vengeful Thief

By Li Ruifen

The director of security personnel at the Tianciliangyuan residential complex was badly injured in an attack by a thief he caught two years ago and who was recently released from prison.

Teng Wenjing has been in the hospital receiving treatment since the January 25 assault in which he was beaten by the thief and several accomplices. He has many scars as reminders of the incident, but is in stable, non-critical condition.

In December 2002, several apartments in Tianciliangyuan were broken into and property such as computers, cash and treasured antiques were stolen, Teng told *Beijing Youth Daily* from his hospital bed on Tuesday. Still director of security personnel at the time, Teng played a key role in the successful capture of the thief, surnamed Feng, who was later sentenced to two years in jail.

Feng was released on January 15.

Ten days later, he appeared at Teng's office and demanded 50,000 yuan in compensation. When Teng refused, Feng and more than 10 others beat him and left him lying unconscious on the street.

Undaunted by the experience, Teng said that if he came across another thief, he would not hesitate to apprehend him and bring him to justice. His only worry is for the safety of his family. Teng told *Beijing Youth Daily* that his family would soon change addresses, but he planned on returning to his job once recovered.



Bus Blaze Kills 17 in Jiangsu

By Liu Zhaoxi

A fire that ripped through a full passenger coach left 17 people dead and five injured at around 10 pm on Tuesday along a highway within the city limits of Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, Xinhua reported.

The 47-seat bus was traveling to Jiashan, Zhejiang Province from Huoqiu, Anhui Province when flames suddenly broke out behind the driver's seat. The driver slammed on the brakes, but the fire quickly grew and spread to the main cabin. Passengers panicked, rushing to the door once the driver had stopped the bus as others clamored to jump out windows to safety.

Most of the 47 passengers were from Anhui, headed to Zhejiang to look for work. Also on board were four employees of the company that owned the bus, a passenger transport firm based in Zhejiang, the *Nanjing Morning Post* said.

A few passengers later told the paper that after the fire broke out, there was an explosion that sounded very much like fireworks going off.

A young man surnamed Guo said his mother pushed him out of a window after the fire spread, but was not able to make it out herself and burned to death inside. Another passenger said the bus had been undergoing repairs throughout that afternoon and was not completely fixed before it set off.

Emergency medical personnel and fire fighters arrived at the scene within an hour and put out the blaze. The cause of the deadly accident is still under investigation.

By Lene Chau

The Legal Committee of the United Nations has, in a split vote, approved a declaration banning forms of human cloning – both reproductive and therapeutic – deemed incompatible with human dignity and the protection of human life.

The approved text calls for “the adoption of all measures necessary to protect human life in the application of the life sciences, and to prohibit the application of genetic engineering techniques that may be contrary to human dignity.”

The issue of human cloning, or cloning of human embryos to obtain stem cells, is deeply divisive among UN member states. The “nonbinding statement” proposed by Honduras, and backed by the US, carried by 71 votes to 35 with 43 abstentions. It will now go to the UN’s 191-nation General Assembly for a final vote.

Honduras, the US and Costa Rica are opposed to this research on any grounds because they view it as the taking of a human life and hailed the vote as a positive ethical step forward.

Opponents of the proposal, including Belgium, Britain and Singapore, said that its authority was undermined by being passed by such a narrow margin.

Many scientists say stem cell research could help develop a cure for chronic illnesses such as Alzheimer’s, cancer, diabetes and spinal cord injuries.

In February of last year, Korean professor Hwang Woo-suk at Seoul National University made global headlines for successfully extracting stem cells from a cloned human embryo.

China also voted against the statement. China has, for a long time, stated that cloning technology should be developed for therapeutic purposes.

Cloning has been a hot topic in China since the late 1990s. China’s first cloned cow was born in Shenzhen Lupeng Company Transgenic Animals Breeding Base in October, 2001. Sadly the animal died merely one hour and 20 minutes after birth.

In 2001 the Animal Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Sciences conducted scientific research on “somatic cell cloning of livestock.” At the beginning of 2004, fourteen somatic cell clone cows were born one after another and became the first independently cloned domestic cows in China. Five of them survived.

At the start of 2004, the Ministry of Science and Technology and the Ministry of Health came out in support of human embryonic stem cell research for therapeutic purposes. Human embryonic stem cells can only come from a small number of sources, such as donors or aborted fetuses, if they are to be used in research. At the same time, China banned research on human cloning.

Su Wei, Chinese Ambassador to the UN: **China opposes the declaration**

The wording of the declaration was vague and the banning of all forms of human cloning contrary to human dignity may be misunderstood as covering therapeutic cloning.

A spokesperson for the US mission to the UN : **the declaration is clear**

The declaration stated very clearly that member states should adopt legislation outlawing all



A cloned sheep in Australia.

UN Cloning Ban Stirs Controversy

cloning practices.

President Bush’s opposition to human cloning and stem cell research is no secret. In 2001 he issued an executive order “restricting federal funding for stem cell research to only those batches of the cells that existed at the time”, provoking various members of Congress last week to introduce bills aimed at side-stepping the ban. **Vanu Gopala Menon**, Singaporean Ambassador to the UN: **the text evades the diversity of views**

A common objective of prohibiting human cloning was hijacked in a misguided bid to widen this ban to include important [stem cell] research. The text does not capture the diversity of views which have been expressed on

against the UN declaration. The world is divided over reproductive and therapeutic cloning. China, together with Britain and other countries think that therapeutic cloning is different from reproductive cloning in that it uses the embryo stem cells for the treatment and prevention of disease.

The objective of an action is the criterion in ethics. Therapeutic cloning and reproductive cloning are differentiated from the perspective of their objectives. Therapeutic cloning has a lot of medical potential if it is controlled and supervised. It does not involve ethical issues at all and we should all support it. Compared with the possibility of saving the lives of hundreds of thousands of patients, the risk that the cloning technique

tients who could be cured thanks to therapeutic cloning techniques will harm social progress.

In fact, therapeutic cloning is a lot more complicated than reproductive cloning and involves more ethical issues.

Wang Hongguang, president of the China National Centre for Biotechnology Development: **Chinese medical research on stem cells will continue**

China is to maintain its opposition to human reproductive cloning, but will continue to allow closely monitored embryo stem cell research for the treatment and prevention of disease.

Therapeutic cloning opens up prospects for the replacement of dead stem cells and will improve the health of individuals and mankind as a whole.

China’s technology in embryo stem cell research is currently taking a leading role among developing countries and several products in the field of skin are facing clinical examinations now. However, compared with developed countries, China still has a long way to go.

Duan Enkui, professor of the Chinese Academy of Science’s Institute of Zoology: **the declaration is self-contradictory**

This political statement claims to protect human dignity and life, but that’s what we are trying to achieve through our work.

We are now working on several projects on embryonic biology and genetic development at the institute and another 30 similar scientific bodies are carrying out research on cloning and genetics in China.

China has a very distinct stance on therapeutic cloning, which is to conduct it on the basis of protecting life.

Therapeutic cloning can solve the problem of graft-versus-host disease (GVHD) in patients, which often comes after organ transplant.

Wang Yanguang, biological ethical analyst from the Institute of Philosophy of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences: **stem cells could be used to assist patients or enhance medical treatment**

In Chinese culture, a life starts the minute a fetus is born, so from a Chinese ethical perspective, tests on human cells are okay. To use stem cells to assist patients or to enhance medical treatment is fully justifiable.

Aborting a three-month-old fetus is legal and widely applied as a population-control measure, and both scientists and Chinese citizens would accept the use of cells taken from an aborted embryo if it’s going to keep someone alive. Most researchers agree that a human embryo does not feel pain during its first eight to 13 days.

Li Sun, member of the Institute of Philosophy of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences: **the only reason to object to human cloning is because of its undeveloped technology**

Human rights are not the basis for opposing reproductive cloning. Whether an embryo has human rights or not is hard to define. A lot of researchers say that a human embryo should not be used for therapeutic cloning after 14 days. But in many countries and regions, the question “when does an embryo have human rights” is greatly disputed.

On the issue of therapeutic cloning, neither supporters nor opponents have yet found very strong ethical grounding for their views. The only reason to object to reproductive cloning is because of its currently undeveloped technology.

Cloning of animals is still at the primary experimental stage. To use such basic techniques on humans is not just a matter of scientific attitude, but also a matter of ethics.



This January, a pair of cloned cows were born in Hebei, China.

Photo by Xinhua

this important issue.

Gavin Watson, British delegate: **the statement would have no impact on British practice**

I voted against the statement as it could be interpreted as a call for a total ban on all forms of human cloning. The statement would have no impact on the practice of so-called therapeutic stem cell research.

Zhai Xiaomei, a PhD supervisor at Beijing Union Medical College: **no ethical issues involved in therapeutic cloning**

China was right in voting

might bring should come second.

He Zuoxiu, academic from the Chinese Academy of Sciences: **therapeutic cloning involves many ethical issues**

The core of the disputes over therapeutic cloning is the conflict between the human embryos and the interests of the patients. First, we must define what is “human”. A single germ cell does not have a neural system and has no senses. To protect the rights of a germ cell, which is not really a human, and ignore the interests of hundreds of thousands of pa-

Soundbites

“You know, on this journey to Europe, I follow in some large footsteps. More than two centuries ago, Benjamin Franklin arrived on this continent to great acclaim. There was scarcely a peasant or citizen who did not consider him as a friend to mankind. I’ve been hoping for a similar reception. But Secretary (of State Condoleezza) Rice told me I should be a realist,” US president **George W. Bush** said in Brussels, Belgium Monday at the start of his five-day fence-mending trip to Europe where tensions were raised by the war in Iraq.

“The Spanish people have sent a message of confidence in the future of Europe,” said French prime minister, **Jean-Pierre Raffarin**, noting that France could hold a referendum on the European Union constitution in May, after Spanish voters showed the way by approving the document. In Spain, 76.7 percent of voters backed the constitution in a nonbinding referendum Sunday.

“This cabinet will pass only when it comes without names of those who were involved in corruption, and without real changes in its composition it will not pass,” said Fatah member **Jamal Shatti**, commenting on the political crisis that the Palestinians faced over installation of a new cabinet with a deadline looming and the two top leaders feuding. On Tuesday, for the second day in a row, Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia failed to persuade the parliament that he had gone far enough to sweep away the mainstays of Yasser Arafat’s old regime.

“Where have you gone? I had a lot of plans for you,” **Hossein Golestani** sang softly to the lifeless form of his 7-year-old daughter, Fatima, held in his arms. The body of his 8-year-old daughter Mariam lay beside him in the devastated village of Hotkan, after an earthquake flattened villages in central Iran on Tuesday, killing at least 420 people, leaving thousands homeless under a cold, driving rain, and some villages reduced to piles of dirt and stone.

“We at the WHO believe that the world is now in the gravest possible danger of a pandemic. If the virus becomes highly contagious among humans, the health impact in terms of deaths and sickness will be enormous, and certainly much greater than SARS,” **Dr. Shigeru Omi**, the World Health Organization’s western Pacific regional director, told the opening of a three-day conference on bird flu in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. He said health agencies around the world urgently need to improve coordination in their fight against the virus.

“The queen will not be attending the civil ceremony because she is aware that the prince and Mrs. Parker Bowles wanted to keep the occasion low key,” a spokesman for Buckingham Palace said Tuesday on condition of anonymity, adding that Queen Elizabeth II would, however, attend the church blessing of the marriage of her son Prince Charles and Camilla Parker Bowles at St. George’s Chapel in Windsor Castle following the civil ceremony.

(Edited by Lene Chau)

Commentary: Civic Virtues, Intangible Social Property

By Shida Zhu

It is a common scene at supermarkets in Beijing for Chinese customers to bend over open counters to pick up such things as garlic, lichee, loquats, apples and tomatoes from piles of goods. The other day, when I went with my wife to a supermarket in northeast Beijing, I even noticed people peeling the garlic, making the open counter an unsightly mess. Other customers snatched off the branches of lichee, loquats, or the green leaves of oranges before they were weighed for a price. During this frantic search and checking, fruit like tomatoes cracked and their juice oozed out, destined to just lie in a mess in the open counter without attract-

ing any attention from the customers any more. I imagine the losses for the supermarket on account of such waste must be considerable.

This also happens at the open shelves of book stores. The otherwise perfectly brand-new books, bound in beautiful covers, are either dirtied or broken into a poor shape thanks to careless perusal by customers.

This involves civic virtues, manners every citizen should pay attention to in social life. A civil environment in which everybody observes the social code will be good for all members of society to live in greater comfort.

It is a pity that we often encounter manners not appropri-

ate for a civilized citizen. For instance, when you ride in a bus or a taxi, you might hear a shrill hawking sound and you’ll see the driver thrust his long neck out of the cabin window and spit. My wife used to caution me to watch out for the phlegm sliming the pavements almost everywhere, as if a legacy of a public gathering. Or when you take a casual walk on the street, you may suddenly feel suffocated by smoke from pedestrians puffing on their cigarettes. It seems that there are so many smokers in the city. As a non-smoker, this annoys me a great deal.

Or you may be taken by surprise on the bus when the person

in the seat behind you suddenly shouts into his mobile phone, sometimes in a queer and funny dialect you do not understand, cracking jokes, throwing angry curses or talking about very private things. This pollution keeps hitting your ears. It is something that is imposed on you that you don’t wish to have. The same thing might happen at a concert when a mobile phone rings amidst ecstatic strains of symphonic music. Can people talk in a more subdued voice at a public venue or simply shut off the mobile phones when in a bus or at a concert?

All these ill manners stem from a lack of awareness of civic

virtues, a lack of the sense of public good. No matter how minute or small these things seem, they make other members of society uncomfortable.

I think as Beijing is going to host the 2008 Olympic Games, it is all the more important for every citizen to be aware of the need to make the city look good in the eyes of the world. Every citizen in a civil society is a window for the rest of China and the outside world. For this end, I think it is vital to carry out civic education and let all members of society know that they have an important share in making their fellow citizens feel good and in making the city look good.

By Dong Nan

The eyes of the world have turned to China in recent years as the country has been in the throes of an unprecedented economic explosion and rapid development. Full-scale modernity and prosperity are on the horizon, but for the time being China still lags far behind most developed countries, a report released by the China Center for Modernization under the China Academy of Sciences concluded.

Based on this estimation, the report assessed China would become a "moderately developed country" before 2050. And fueled by ongoing growth, China should enter the ranks of the world's top 40 developed countries in the first half of this century, the report said.

Widening gap

"In the last 20 years of the last century, China made great economic achievements, but the absolute gap between this country and developed countries is still growing wider," it said.

The reason is that China's starting point for economic development was very low and growth came slowly at first.

Between 1960 and 2000, the gap between China and the US expanded 12 fold. In 1960, China's gross domestic product (GDP) per capita was \$2,787 lower than the US and the spread grew to \$33,905 in 2000, even accounting for inflation.

He Chanqi, director of the China Center for Modernization Research and leader of the research group that compiled the report told *Beijing Today* that three groups of data were used to compare China's level of economic modernization against developed countries: per capita GDP, proportion of agricultural laborers in the whole working population and the proportion of gross GDP accounted for by agriculture.

In 2001, per capita GDP in China reached \$3,583, a figure the US hit 109 years before. Agricultural laborers made up 50 percent of China's working population, an equivalent to 1870 America, while agriculture made up 15 percent of the country's total GDP, a level the US reached in 1914.

"We concluded the general development gap between China and the US is equivalent to around 109 years," He said.

Based on the same equations, China was also 80 years behind Germany, 50 years behind Japan, some 30 years behind Portugal and 20 years behind South Korea, he added.

There is little hope for China bridging the gap this century. Per capita GDP in the US hit \$35,400 in 2002, and if that figure maintained four percent growth, it would increase by \$1,416 every year, He explained. In 2002, China's GDP per capita was \$960, meaning even at eight percent annual growth, it would only increase by \$77 a year, which works out to taking more than 100 years for China to reach the US' current level of prosperity.

Three major tasks

The report pointed out that from now through 2050, China faced three great challenges in its modernization drive - improving economic

Modernity Still Long Off for China



He Chanqi
Photos by Beijing Youth Daily

Economic Modernization Level of China and Developed Countries

(inflation accounted for in all figures)

Nations	GDP per capita (\$)			Proportion of agricultural laborers (%)			Agriculture's contribution to overall economy (%)			Average gap in years
	Number	Year	Gap in years	Number	Year	Gap in years	Number	Year	Gap in years	
China	3,583	2001		50	2001		15	2001		
UK	3,649	1881	120	34	1801	200	15	1870	131	143
Holland	3,726	1879	104	43	1807	194	19	1913	88	123
Belgium	3,652	1900	101	51	1846	155	9	1910	91	112
Switzerland	3,594	1901	100	42	1880	121	--	--	--	111
US	3,732	1892	109	50	1870	131	15	1914	87	109
Australia	3,645	1870	131	33	1901	100	15	1955	46	102
Canada	3,644	1906	95	44	1901	100	18	1925	76	92
Germany	3,772	1925	76	50	1870	131	16	1935	66	87
France	3,718	1923	78	49	1870	131	13	1950	51	85
Argentina	3,657	1908	93	40	1895	106	15	1960	41	83
Denmark	3,710	1911	90	47	1901	100	17	1955	46	82
Austria	3,682	1928	73	55	1910	91	15	1920	81	80
Sweden	3,657	1928	73	48	1910	91	15	1925	76	78
Norway	3,757	1936	65	50	1891	110	14	1930	71	78
Ireland	3,641	1952	49	51	1841	160	16	1975	26	71
Italy	3,738	1951	50	48	1936	65	13	1960	41	52
Finland	3,610	1947	54	46	1950	51	17	1960	41	50
Japan	3,988	1960	41	48	1950	51	13	1960	41	44
Spain	3,804	1961	40	49	1950	51	15	1965	36	42
Russia	3,768	1958	43	46	1950	51	17	1980	21	40
Portugal	3,747	1964	37	48	1950	51	15	1970	31	39
Mexico	3,702	1965	36	45	1970	31	15	1960	41	36
Brazil	3,882	1973	28	46	1970	31	15	1955	46	33
Greece	3,840	1963	38	46	1970	31	15	1985	16	31
South Korea	3,775	1977	24	50	1970	31	15	1980	21	25

quality, modifying its economic structure and enhancing its international competitiveness.

The development of the Chinese economy accelerated in the 1990s, He noted. On one hand, the country's rapid industrialization created a lot of wealth, but on the other, due to problems with the distribution of that wealth and the weak social insurance system, the consumption abilities of the masses could not develop as quickly as the economy itself. That in turn has caused supply of many products to exceed demand, which over the long run is a trend likely to continue to hold back economic quality and efficiency.

In 2002, the average GDP per capita in developed countries was \$26,490, about 27 times of that of China (\$960). In other words, if China wanted to improve its economic quality to the level of developed countries in 2002, it must increased

its GDP per capita 26 fold, a process that would take the country 49 years at seven to eight percent annual growth, He said.

"The overall economic structure in China is rather weak and the tasks facing us are very challenging, because the costs and risks of improving basic structure are huge and involve redistribution of interests," he added. According to the report, in 2002, agricultural laborers accounted for half China's entire working population, while the country's agricultural sector only contributed 15 percent of its total economy and was 10.2 times less productive than the industrial sector. In developed countries, agricultural laborers on average made up four percent of the workforce and agriculture two percent of the economy, while industry was only two times more productive than agriculture.

If China wanted to reduce the agricultural population to the level of developed countries in the year of 2050, it must move five percent of its agricultural work force to other industries every year. However, in 2002, China had a population of 1.28 billion, greater than the total of all developed countries (0.97 billion), and that number should only keep increasing in the foreseeable future, making the task of better distributing laborers even harder.

To improve her competitiveness on the international scene, the report said, China must improve its market economy system. The report suggested the most urgent tasks for the government were to establish an economic law code and make information more transparent. Another key was to support enterprises

able to participate in international competition and push to make more companies and entrepreneurs qualified to do so.

Hard road ahead

"That China will succeed in continuing to modernize should not be taken for granted," He told *Beijing Today*, pointing out that in the past 100 years, only around nine percent of the countries of the globe succeeded in realizing true economic modernization.

He's research indicates a general path that China may follow in the course of its modernization drive this century. In the first stage, China would move from an undeveloped country to a primary-level developed country around 2020 and then make it into the ranks of mid-level developed countries near 2050. Developed country status could come around 2080, and by the beginning of the 22nd century, China could stand as one of the most developed countries in the world, the report stated.

Is that a realistic forecast? Only time can tell.

By Dong Nan

China has been striving to increase enrollment at colleges and universities around the country since 1998, and last year, college students accounted for an unprecedented 19 percent of the country's 18 to 22 year old population.

But behind the growing numbers are rising frustrations that young people of different social strata do not receive equal chances to receive higher education.

A survey conducted by a research team from the Beijing Institute of Technology indicates that opportunities for education are divided along regional lines and the gaps are growing.

Urban-rural gap

Access to higher education divides clearly down lines between people in cities and rural areas, with urban populations containing significantly more college and university graduates than countryside regions, and is the most obvious

ban population that has received college education 281 times that of the rural population and an even higher 323 greater in terms of post-graduate education.

High school bottleneck

The disparity of college access was not a separate phenomenon, but a continuation of troubles in getting into and out of high school, the survey found.

From 1998 to 2002, the rate of senior high school students entering colleges (including two-year colleges) rose from 46.1 percent to 83.6 percent, but the rate of junior high school students entering senior high school rose less than three percent. In that same time, the number of high schools in cities and towns increased 6.4 percentage points, while actually shrinking in rural areas by a troubling seven percent.

And that points to the possible crux of the problem and main reason why rural youth are hitting a bottleneck to higher education at the high school



More than 50 percent of rural respondents had only primary school education.

Photo by Xu Benyu

Rural Students Get Raw Deal in Education

area of disparity revealed by the survey.

The survey even uncovered some troubling numbers for China's plan to put all its people through nine years of compulsory education. More than 50 percent of rural respondents had only primary school education, meaning receiving schooling from ages seven through 12, and another 41.5 percent had gone no further than junior high school education, which covers children ages 13 to 15. Those figures compare unfavorably to 16.3 percent and 32.4 percent among urban people.

The gap becomes more marked at higher levels. While only six percent of the rural population had completed high school, covering ages 16 to 18, 12 percent of the urban population had and another 13.2 percent graduated from polytechnic high schools, compared to just 0.8 percent among rural people, the survey found.

Graduates of two-year colleges and four-year colleges made up 11.1 percent and 5.63 percent of cities' populations versus a miniscule 0.2 percent and 0.02 percent of the rural population. Numbers for people who had received post-graduate education were low in all accounts, though still significantly favored cities - specifically 0.323 of the urban population against 0.001 percent in the countryside. Those number translate to massive disparity, with the proportion of the ur-

level. In 2002, people in the countryside made up just short of 61 percent of China's population, but the vast hinterland had only 49.6 percent of the country's high schools.

College elitism

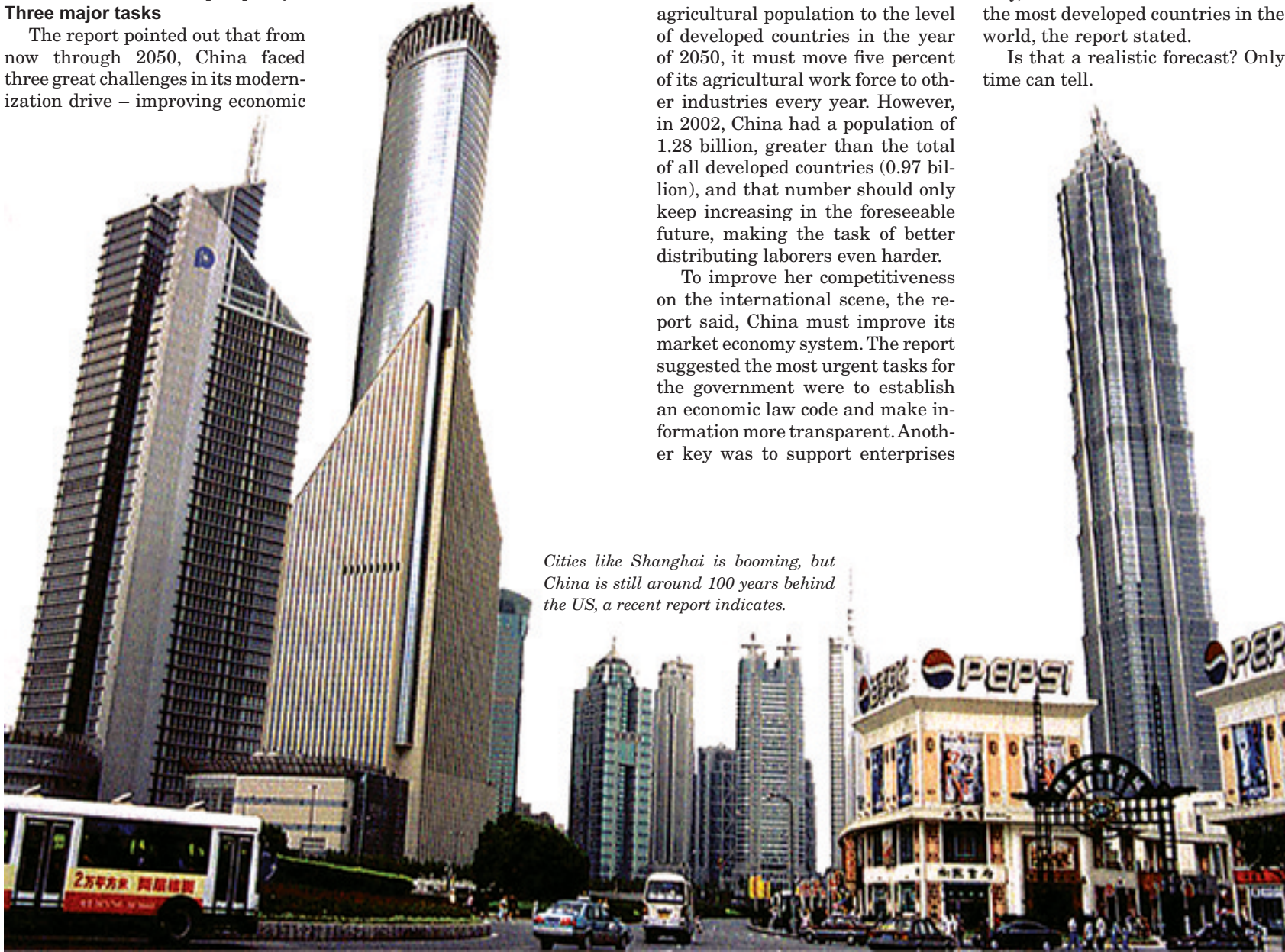
Those few rural students able to make the cut to enter college face far slimmer chances of making it into an elite institution than their city counterparts.

The survey revealed that the number of rural students at such top-notch schools as Tsinghua University, Beijing University and Beijing Normal University is falling. In 2000, rural students made up 17.6 percent of Tsinghua's student body, down 4.1 percent from a decade before, and the proportions at Beijing University and Beijing Normal University showed similar drops of 2.5 percent and 5.7 percent in the same period.

Where rural student enrollment is increasing is at regional colleges that offer lesser conditions and educational quality, such as Tangshan college, North China Coal Medical College and Hebei Institute of Technology. In 2003, rural students made up 63.3 percent of all students at those schools, nearly eight percent more than two years before.

Survey information:

The survey was conducted by a research group from Beijing Institute of Technology led by professor Yang Dongping and based on statistics from the Ministry of Education and studies of dozens of universities and colleges in Beijing and Hebei Province.



Cities like Shanghai is booming, but China is still around 100 years behind the US, a recent report indicates.



AIDS

Refuge Opens in Shanxi

By Zhou Ying

A report by Xinhua News Agency last Tuesday revealed that “a hospital in north China’s Shanxi Province has set up a unique center for HIV/AIDS patients where they can receive treatment and make a living too.” After being picked up by the rest of the media, the story aroused a vigorous debate among the public, with some in favor of the idea and some against it. Some expressed fears that the center was being used as an isolation area to separate HIV/AIDS patients from the rest of society.

Green Harbor

Ten kilometers away from The Linfen City Infectious Diseases Hospital, an area of land has been found for the new center in Licun village, Linfen city, Shanxi. The center is called Green Harbor.

According to Xinhua News Agency, nearly eighty percent of HIV carriers and AIDS patients in Shanxi come from the southern areas of the province. But there is no special hospital there, and a lack of doctors and equipment to provide treatment.

So on July 24 last year the Linfen City Infectious Diseases Hospital leased the land, measuring 90 mu (14.82 acres), from Licun Village for 1.5 million yuan. Hospital staff called the new center Green Harbor, in the hope that it could offer not only physical treatment but also psychological comfort for HIV/AIDS sufferers and

their families.

“A harbor is a place where boats anchor, and also it can be a place for people who are tired or suffering to have a rest. The AIDS patients are victims, they deserve to be able to come here to receive treatment. I hope that we can also give them hope to live and the courage to face life,” said Guo Xiaoping, head of the Linfen City Infectious Diseases Hospital, to the *Beijing News* last week.

He said that there are 38 wards with a total number of 76 beds at the center. “About 70 patients have received treatment since the center opened,” he added.

According to Guo, the area is divided into three zones: treatment zone, logistics zone and work zone. Patients and their families can grow grain, vegetables and flowers in the 70-mu work zone, and then sell the farm produce to make some money. The area also has an entertainment venue, a library and a gym.

“By establishing this special compound of hospital wards, entertainment venues and farmland, we intend to explore a new mode in dealing with AIDS,” Guo explained.

Heated dispute begins

The refuge for the AIDS patients has not received universal acclaim. Some ask why it is necessary to have a special zone for AIDS patients, and question whether it’s a form of isolation in disguise.

But Guo explained to *China Youth Daily* on Monday that all the patients in the

center came there of their own free will. “Since AIDS cannot be transmitted through the air, it is not necessary to isolate HIV carriers or AIDS patients,” Guo said.

However, one undoubted benefit of Green Harbor is to protect patients from exposure to other infectious diseases, a particular risk as AIDS corrodes the immune system. “The center also can respect the patents’ right to privacy,” Guo added.

One woman told *China Youth Daily* last week that she had taken her son to the Green Harbor last year, and that now his health was in a stable condition. She also said the doctors had given him more courage and confidence. “I myself also found a job at the center, so we can support ourselves now,” she said happily.

One patient, who asked not to be named, said, “Actually we do not have to pay for anything except for the food.” Guo told *China Youth Daily* that the treatment charge, medicine cost and even the water and electricity are all paid for by the hospital. “The local government and Red Cross organization give us a lot of help. They provide us with medicine and money. Meanwhile, Linfen City Infectious Diseases Hospital is profitable now, so we can afford the costs,” Guo said.

According to a report in *China Youth Daily* on Tuesday, three experts from the World Health Organization recently inspected the center. They were greatly impressed, especially by the quality of

the treatment, and promised to provide further financial support in the future.

Can’t avoid discrimination

Some have questioned whether the center can be sustained. According to Guo, Green Harbor has received donations of 3,000 yuan up to now, and they have bought food and basic items for the patients with the money. However, owing to the lack of funds, some basic areas of infrastructure, such as communications, have not been fully constructed.

Furthermore, according to *The Mirror*, a Beijing-based newspaper, the local villagers do not like the idea of this center for HIV/AIDS patients so close to their homes. “I hope that they don’t come into our village,” a villager from nearby Dongli village said. He said he was afraid that mosquitoes might transmit the AIDS virus locally.

Zhang Honghai, a barber from the same village, also said he would not allow the patients into his shop, even though he has some knowledge of AIDS and realizes that it is not that infectious. “I do not have a choice, though, because most people here don’t know about AIDS infection. I am afraid that if I serve the patients, I may lose a lot of regular clients,” Zhang explained.

Guo Xiaoping told *The Mirror* that the prevention and treatment of AIDS is an issue that needs to be embraced by the whole of society. “I am quite confident about the task although it remains difficult,” he added.

Corrupt Official On the Run in the US

By Liu Zhaoxi

Yang Xiuzhu, former vice chief of Zhejiang Construction Department, is still on the run from international law enforcement agencies, and she’s believed to be in the US. A source identified as Chen has just confirmed to Anhui-based *Jianghui Morning Post* that Yang purchased real estate in the US in 1996 and that she’s currently earning rental income from it. Yang, 59, fled China in April 2003 after a colleague was investigated for embezzlement. She has been charged with bribery and embezzlement.

Chen told *Jianghui Morning Post* that Yang had purchased a five-story apartment building in Manhattan, New York, in 1996 with the help of her relatives. Chen also said that Yang owes more than \$7,000 in tax and is being pursued for it by the New York City authorities. City records also show that Yang owns at least four real estate properties in the city.

Who is Yang Xiuzhu?

Yang Xiuzhu’s career sounds like a legend. She started out as a store clerk selling steamed bread in Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province, after she had finished junior high school. But by the time she was in her thirties she had become deputy director of the city planning bureau of Wenzhou. In 1989, she was promoted to bureau director. Further promotion made her the deputy mayor of Wenzhou in 1995. Three years later, she reached the position of vice chief of the construction department of Zhejiang Province.

One of her former subordinates once told Shanghai-based *The Bund Weekly* that Yang was a capable and diligent woman, though others remember her less fondly. “Yang Xiuzhu is a very controversial figure in the real estate field in Zhejiang,” a real estate businessman who used to know her and who didn’t want to be named, told the weekly. Yang was known to be ostentatious and rude, sometimes cursing people in front of others and causing great embarrassment. “Of course, there are also people who had favorable impressions of her. But not many,” said the businessman.

Though Yang’s work as a city planner was not too popular, her dynamism was never disputed. In 1994, Yang was on the verge of promotion to deputy mayor of the city. The decision had to be made by the standing committee of the local People’s Congress through a vote. Yang met the committee members one by one. Using her power in city planning and real estate, she built a new residential building to provide better housing for the committee members. She got the votes she needed and was duly promoted.

In 1998, Yang used her relationships within the provincial government to make her way to Hangzhou, the capital of Zhejiang, where she took the job of vice chief of the provincial construction department.

Investigation and the escape

In 2002, Yang’s younger brother, Yang Guangrong, who was then the vice-manager of a real estate development company, was found to have accepted a bribe of 180,000 yuan. On April 17, 2003, another official close to Yang, Gao Yunguang, who was then the deputy director of Wenzhou City Planning Bureau, was placed under investigation for embezzlement. Three days later, Yang Xiuzhu fled.

Early in the morning on April 20, Yang told her colleagues in Hangzhou that her mother was sick and that she had to return to Wenzhou. “Don’t call my cell phone unless it’s important,” she told her subordinates.

On Monday, officials at the construction department called Yang’s cell phone to ask about her mother. Nobody answered the call. On Tuesday, the cell phone was switched off.

In the next two days, nothing was heard from Yang or her mother. On Friday, the department dispatched two people to Wenzhou to find out what was going on. They met Yang’s sister who told them there was nothing wrong with her mother and that Yang had not been

to Wenzhou.

The government confirmed in the next week that Yang had left China, heading for Singapore. Soon after, there were reports that Yang had been seen in New York on April 21.

A few weeks later, the Zhejiang Provincial Commission for Disciplinary Inspection began to investigate Yang’s sudden departure. They soon decided that Yang was involved with her brother Yang Guangrong’s bribery case. The commission promptly announced Yang’s expulsion from the Party and from office.

The investigation of Yang started in November 2003. A year later, 19 officials were found to have been drawn into Yang’s web of corruption, which involved funds of more than 250 million yuan. It all seemed to confirm rumors that had been circulating locally for some time, saying that Yang was the No.1 corrupt official in Wenzhou.

Last month, the case of Gao Yunguang came to court, becoming the first among a series of corruption cases related to Yang. Gao had become the general manager of Wenzhou Railway Real Estate Developing Co. in 1996 with the help of Yang. Meanwhile, Yang took the position of chairman of the company. At that time, Yang was also deputy mayor of Wenzhou, in charge of city construction.

At the end of 1996, Yang pressured Gao and his colleagues at the real estate company to embezzle more than 11 million yuan from the company. She gave the money to another brother of hers, Yang Jinjun, who needed the funds to pay bank loans.

Gao and his colleagues in the case were sentenced to jail from three to 20 years. But Yang was still at large, despite the fact that a wanted order had been issued internationally through the International Criminal Police Organization in early 2004.

Legacy of Yang’s administration

Hu Lishen, Yang’s predecessor as the vice chief of Zhejiang Construction Department, once told *Nan Feng Chuang*, a Guangzhou-based magazine, that the reconstruction of Renmin Road in Wenzhou, one of Yang’s major works, actually destroyed the city landscape and caused traffic problems.

People in Wenzhou were also upset at Yang’s actions during reconstruction of the old town areas. She sold the land in these areas at very low prices to Wenzhou people who had moved abroad, even though they were not real estate developers. So much land was sold and rented through her hands that little in the old town area is now available for development. So land shortage has caused the housing price to keep climbing.

“Wenzhou is a small city, but the housing price is now as high as in Shanghai. In addition, because of poorly planned development, the landscape in the old town area was destroyed. All of this is the result of Yang’s time in charge of the Wenzhou real estate market,” said a Wenzhou official, whose name was not given, to *Caijing* magazine.

It seems that Yang did business with overseas people with a clear purpose. While they bought land from Yang at very low prices and made a huge profit out of it, they rewarded her by transferring money into Yang’s overseas accounts so she could purchase property, according to the investigation by *Caijing*.

Fleeing abroad

Yang is not the only corrupt government official to have fled overseas to escape punishment. In 2001, *China Comment* said there were more than 4,000 suspects in bribery and embezzlement who had fled the country. So far, only a few have been arrested.

On Wednesday, in an interview with *China Youth Daily*, Thomas V. Fuentes, Special Agent in Charge of International Operations for the US FBI, said the US would help investigate and repatriate corrupt Chinese officials. He also said the FBI would investigate Yang’s case if asked to by the Chinese authorities.

Photo by Yang Zhanghua



Treading Water

"You know, if we go into a hotel or a gym, he can smell the chlorine in the pool. You can see it in his eyes. But if he can't find something by the summer, we will go back to Moldova. We can't stay here forever with nothing."

By Gareth George

Max Cazmirciuc, the hero of Moldova, seems happy enough, as he sits in Peter Pan restaurant amid the leafy surrounds of Sanlitun. But though the atmosphere is genial, life is not treating this former sports star quite as kindly as he might have expected. Olympian, coach, secretary of his nation's swimming federation, multiple national record holder, winner of scores of international medals: Cazmirciuc's history is one of success, talent and achievement. It seems a little at odds with the laconic giant wrapped in winter clothes who offers a shovel sized hand by way of greeting.

Having officially retired from top class competition in 1996, Max and his fiancée Gabrielle came to Beijing last June, "To try something different, experience a new culture and perhaps start a new life." Opportunities in Moldova have been thin on the ground since his retirement – not an easy situation for a man still young, one who had spent the majority of his years at the zenith of world class sport.

Soviet style

Max was born in Chisinau, Moldova's capital, in 1971, to Ukrainian parents. At the time, Moldova was a part of the old Soviet Union and the USSR took sport very seriously. "There was a lot of money available for the development of sport," says Cazmirciuc. "One day, one of the coaches came into my classroom at school. They selected three or four boys, because of their size and athleticism. And also..." Cazmirciuc's great arm suddenly sweeps across the table, bending back slightly at the elbow; he has a double joint.

Max was seven years old when he was selected. But it

meant leaving his family for much of the year, and Max was adamant that he would not go. "I cried. I said to my mother 'I don't want to swim, I want to read books and study.' The coaches had been watching me for a year and they believed I had talent and that I should go with them. There was a lot of discussion, and eventually my mother said it was up to me. But the coaches were very persuasive. They kept coming back to tell her what a big opportunity I would be missing. They were convinced I had a lot of talent, so in the end I went."

Although Cazmirciuc dislikes talking politics, he admits growing up in the Soviet sport programme was very good for him. "We trained twice a day, but from seven to 10 years old it was just fun, it only became hard work later." Indeed, the USSR spent the equivalent of US\$50 a day on every boy at Max's training camp. He stayed there 250 days a year, high in the mountains, with the best coaches and the best facilities all geared towards turning these small boys into world class athletes. They ate caviar and red fish every day and were treated very well. "It was an excellent preparation for the body," adds Cazmirciuc.

At 10, Cazmirciuc began to compete seriously. "Newspapers and various organizations would organize competitions," he says. When he was 15 years old, he went to the camp for Junior class swimmers and the competitions became more serious; first against his compatriots from the Republic of Moldova, and later against the best young swimmers in the Soviet Union. At the age of 16 he won his first major medals: twice in one year he took Silver in the top Junior competition for the USSR. Next came an International Cup, and by now Max



A shoulder load of medals

Photo by Gabrielle

was officially regarded among the world's elite swimmers.

Wind of change

In 1989, Max was a member of the Soviet team which took on the East German Swimming Federation. The same year, he took two silver medals at the Juniors Games in the Ukraine. Then, in 1992, everything changed. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, he was now a citizen of Moldova. While this wasn't a huge issue for him in itself, the money provided by the USSR dried up over night. Many of the top coaches moved with the money – to Europe, Australia and the USA. Max continued to enjoy competing and to win medals, but missed the influence of the top class Soviet coaches. "Travelling, both with the USSR and later with the Moldovan team was very good. It developed my character. I was very lucky, as few people were able to travel so much in the USSR. One of my Soviet coaches, Strogov Victor Alexandr, always took time to show us culture – art galleries and museums – wherever we traveled," says Cazmirciuc. So, was he a father figure of sorts, as well as a coach? Max thinks

Soviets. There weren't even any good training pools, and no salary for a coach – the budget for coach for the national team was US\$30 a month – so you can see, it's a bad situation."

For Max, growing up in the Soviet Sports programme should have guaranteed a good future. He gave his life to the sport, and sacrificed experience and qualifications in other areas because of it. In return for this, the Soviets would have rewarded him by making the most of his experience and talent by making him a coach. But the opportunities just weren't there in the new Moldova. Although Max doesn't let it get to him, Gabrielle feels depressed on his behalf. They have been together four years, and she has seen what it has been like for the proud athlete during this time. "It's sad because he can't continue to do what he loves. To swim or to coach kids. They made him secretary of Moldovan swimming, but he's still a young man and he wants to be involved with the sport where it matters."

Even before the Olympics, Cazmirciuc had been forced to compete abroad. "In '95, a Bulgarian club offered me the chance to swim for them. They offered 10 times the salary that I got in Moldova. We waited for the Moldovan Federation to say it was okay, but they said no. They said we couldn't go without the Federation signing a contract. We went anyway. We got into trouble, but we didn't care. They weren't paying us and I needed to make a living."

Life in China

Max is careful not to expect too much from China. He qualified as a coach in St. Petersburg in 2002, and has qualifications conferred by the Moldovan Swimming Federation. But he's also trained as a professional driver, in case he

can't find work doing what he loves. "I've coached the national team in Moldova, but I've also coached talented 6 to 10 year olds." Max says. "This is what I'd love to do. I love working with children. It's all fun to them. All a game."

Max has already found it difficult here in Beijing. He's not yet proficient in Mandarin. And he's sent out 100 copies of his resume, "To hotels, sports centers, gyms," with no offers as yet. Max shrugs his massive shoulders. It's tough for a man so used to success, a man once ranked as the 12th best swimmer on the planet, to have to move abroad in search of work. But while Gabrielle can see this, she's confident it's just a matter of time. "Lots of people have the same situation as Max, it's not just athletes. It's difficult for every kind of business in Moldova. And it's nobody's fault. It's just politics."

"Max still has dreams of winning," says Gabrielle. "And he's trying very hard to find some coaching work. It's very hard, but you know what I think he needs? To be back in training again. He still swims every morning but I'd like him to try and get ready for the Olympics here in Beijing. I think he can do it. And if he could compete there again..." Gabrielle smiles. "You know, if we go into a hotel or a gym, he can smell the chlorine in the pool. You can see it in his eyes. But if he can't find something by the summer, we will go back to Moldova. We can't stay here forever with nothing."

Whether his determination is innate or has been barked into him by Strogov Victor Alexandr, it's hard to see Max Cazmirciuc giving up easily.

If you have an opportunity you feel Max might be suited to, either as a swimming coach or a driver, check Page 12 for his contact details.



Max's natural environment



Keeping in trim

Photos by Tian Yufeng

軒雨今來

Cradle of New Culture in Memory

By Peng Juan

A special relic-collecting campaign dedicated to the 90th anniversary of Lai Jin Yu Xuan Teahouse was launched in Zhongshan Park on January 27, when a half-century-old stele with bold inscriptions of the name of the teahouse was unveiled before the gate of Lai Jin Yu Xuan.

With the theme Lai Jin Yu Xuan in Your Memory, the campaign aims to collect historical relics of teahouses from all over the world, such as old photos, a broken brush, a piece of yellowed paper, a short anecdote, a small bar of brick tea, a selection of old ballad, or a broken teacup.

Red Mansion Banquet

Entering the front gate of Zhongshan Park on the west side of Tian'anmen Gate and walking not far along the zigzag corridor on the east, you'll see a two-storied elegant brick-wooden building in the quiet and tastefully laid-out surroundings. This is Lai Jin Yu Xuan.

Its central architectural style features strong traditional Chinese design elements. The garden inside the courtyard is embellished with decorative rock outcroppings, bridges, fountains, waterfalls, grass and flowers, collectively providing a delightful contrast.

There is a huge rock lying behind the marble archway at the end of a pine-shaded path; the rock was transferred from the ruins of Yuanmingyuan Park. From here to the north of an area of flowerbeds stands a grove of ancient cypresses, seven of which are around 1,000 years old. To the south is a lofty bronze statue of Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, the founding father of the Republic of China (1911-1949).

Lai Jin Yu Xuan, now a restaurant, is world-renowned for its "Red Mansion Banquet," first presented in 1983, and which mainly serves dishes as described in the classic Chinese novel, *A Dream of Red Mansions*.

The Red Mansion Banquet not only reflects the dietary habits and customs of Chinese people from all walks of life between the late Ming and the early Qing dynasties, but also embodies the functions of dietary therapy – an adjunct of traditional Chinese medicine that emphasizes the medical value of food ingredients. The cuisine is unique in terms of color, taste, style, refinement, delicacy and healthfulness as well as its style of presentation. It has been a favorite choice for entertaining officials, scholars and tourists from states and areas all over the world.

A place of friendship

But Lai Jin Yu Xuan is far more than just a garden-like restaurant. Built in 1915, it was originally a teahouse until the early 1980s. The teahouse's original stele was inscribed by Xu Shichang, the then president of the Republic of China's Beiyang Government (1912-1928).

It is said that the inscription alludes to a poem titled *On Autumn*, written by Tang Dynasty poet Du Fu, in which the words "Jiu Yu" (old rains) and "Jin Yu" (new rains) were used as an expression meaning "old friends and new friends"; hence, Lai Jin Yu Xuan actually means a place where new friends get together in the true spirit of friendship.

The late calligraphic master Guo Fenghui wrote the signature-less stele unveiled on January 27. As the story goes, when former US General Haig visited Zhongshan Park in 1971, he was surprised that such a famous place as Lai Jin Yu Xuan had no stele dedicated to it.

Under the late premier Zhou Enlai's instruction, Guo Fenghui, then on his sickbed suffering intestinal cancer and an eye disease, inscribed the four characters of Lai Jin Yu Xuan on the new stele before he in January 1973. But Guo's 63-year-old daughter Guo Yunling, who attended the stele's unveiling ceremony, said the stele was actually inscribed in the 1960s, not in 1971 as popularly believed.

Cradle of New Culture Movement

During the New Culture Movement in the early 20th century – the period between 1917 and 1923, which was marked by student and intellectual ferment and protests against the warlord government, Lai Jin Yu Xuan was the site of high-level literary salons of the celebrities.

In the summer of 1920, Zhou Enlai held a revolutionists' tea party here. It was also the favorite reading and socializing place for Lu Xun, the renowned writer, critic, translator and literary theorist known for his scathing critiques of social ills and his leftist leanings. In 1920 Li Dazhao, an intellectual and one of the founders of the Chinese Communist Party, established the Youth China Academy in Lai Jin Yu Xuan. The historic Literature Seminar was initiated and set up here by eminent writers like

Zheng Zhenduo, Shen Yanbing and Ye Shengtao. In 1929, Zhang Henshui and wrote the popular romance novel *Story of Three Loves* in the rear courtyard.

If you are attentive enough, you'll still find the faint traces here and there of the anecdotes and laughter of such literary elites as Zhu Ziqing, Zhu Guangqian, Lin Huiyin, Shen Congwen, Lao She, and Qi Baishi.

After the birth of New China in 1949, Lai Jin Yu Xuan became a place for China's party and state leaders to receive visiting foreign state leaders and world-renowned celebrities.

In the past 90 years, countless revolutionaries, writers, poets and scholars have met here to talk about literature, art, society and philosophy while sipping tea. Lai Jin Yu Xuan, just like the Red Building in Beijing University, has been an important witness and symbol of China's New Culture Movement.

Polished cultural pearl

The restoration of the teahouse, which has been disused for more than 60 years, began last September, revealed Wang Minjie, the principal of Lai Jin Yu Xuan at the relic-collecting campaign launching ceremony on January 27.

"Based on our knowledge from historical documents and collections, the imperial garden style and renovating technology are applied in the restoration," Wang said. The true-to-history restoration has won recognition from many senior literary elites who remember the original teahouse.

Except for the 480 patterns of the Flower-Scattering Angel on the hall ceiling, which is copied from the Flying Apparatus of Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes, the new Lai Jin Yu Xuan to a large extent has maintained the style and taste of the original.

The couplets on both side columns of the front gate allude to the imperial garden-like teahouse, the ideal socializing place for guests and friends. Walking inside, you'll see a commodious hall that can accommodate 20-odd people, where guests can taste aromatic tea, appreciate calligraphy and paintings, chat with friends, or just take a rest.

There are four elegantly decorated rooms, all white walled and black tiled with a wooden door engraved with the "Four Gracious Plants" – plum blossom, orchid, bamboo and chrysanthemum, which in traditional Chinese culture represent in turn the four moral characters of nobility, grace, uprightness and simple life with high self-esteem.

Walking along the corridor up to the second floor of the main building and looking out into the distance, one catches glimpses of ancient trees, the Forbidden City and other buildings in the traditional Chinese style hidden amongst thickets of trees. The scenery is indeed picturesque.

The campaign of "Lai Jin Yu Xuan in Your Memory" will run from January 28 to March 15. "It is to re-polish the cultural pearl under the imperial city wall, to make the cradle of China's New Culture Movement gestate again", said Wang.

By Li Ruifen

When the creative, modern and romantic style of French culture encounters the imaginative, ancient and primitive features of Chinese civilization, the world is able to witness a most wonderful and successful integration of human intelligence...

In the summer of 2004, the first China culture year came to a close in France, leaving people there enchanted by the sensation it created. Through a year of performances, shows and exhibitions showcasing Chinese art and culture at such famous sites as the Eiffel Tower and Versailles, French people got to know and understand an ancient, colorful and modern China. Now, while France is showing its unique culture to China through the French Culture Year that began in October last year, the Chinese national treasures that created waves of sensation in France have returned to their home, and can be seen in a special at the National Museum of China.

The exhibition is divided into four parts: Confucius, the Mysterious Ancient Kingdom of Shu, Chinese Landscape Painting and Grand Emperor Kangxi, which form the quintessence of the exhibitions held in France.

Confucius

Confucius, China's greatest educationist and thinker, has an unshakable status in Chinese culture and civilization. He founded the idea of private teaching and recruiting students from society, developed education theories that are still applicable in today's modern world, and established Confucianism, which has been influencing people in Asia and all over the world for nearly 2,000 years.

In the Han Dynasty, Dong Zhongshu, an official under Emperor Wu, raised the policy of "Rejecting all others and respecting only Confucianism." Confucius has never lost his popularity among people of Asia, and the revival of Confucianism in Western society may prove the important and indispensable role of Confucius in world history.

It is recorded that Confucius had 3,000 students, 72 of whom were outstanding in the classical six arts (propriety, music, archery, riding, writing and arithmetic). The exhibit Confucius Lecturing to Students depicts Confucius sitting on stone platform under a peach tree, giving a speech. His four best students stand beside their teacher listening carefully, some bending down as if to ask something. In the distance, other students are walking in threes and fours toward the platform, talking excitedly with each other. The picture is logically designed and brightly colored, embodying its great artistic value.

Mysterious Ancient Kingdom of Shu

From the unearthed Sanxingdui site in Sichuan Province, which has caused tremendous excitement in archaeology circles, to the famous poem *The Road to Shu* is harder than the Road to Heaven, we have heard countless stories and legends about the kingdom of Shu. Cultivated in the mild climate and rich soil of the Sichuan Basin, the ancient Shu developed approximately between the Xia and Shang dynasties. Legends says that the ancient kingdom was ruled successively by six kings, until it was conquered by Qin Dynasty.

No records remain of the kingdom, and it was not until the 1980s when the discovery of the Sanxingdui and Jinsha sites in Chengdu, that the mysterious veil of thousands of years was swept aside.

The outstanding bronze works, jade articles and gold items, works of extraordinary imagination and great creativity, declare to the world the glory of the ancient Shu kingdom.

Chinese landscape painting

The Exhibition of Holy Mountains is not only an exhibition of Chinese painting, but also a summary of the development of Chinese landscape painting.

Landscape painting started in the Wei and Jin dynasties, becoming an independent branch of Chinese painting in the Sui and Tang dynasties, and had fully matured by the end of the Tang and Five Dynasties.

Mi Youren, a landscape painter of the Southern Song Dynasty, was famous for his free, bold and unrestrained painting style. His work *Mountains with Clouds* depicting vivid mountain scenery is one of the represen-

National Treasures Return from France

tative landscape paintings of the Song Dynasty.

In the latter period of Yuan Dynasty, Chinese landscape painting was brought to new heights by "the four great painters of the Yuan Dynasty," Huang Gongwang, Wang Meng, Wu Zhen and Ni Zan, who were known for their simple and refined painting style.

In the Ming Dynasty, when artist Ni Duan painted *Inviting Pang De*, which tells a story about Liu Biao, the governor of Jinzhou of the Eastern Han Dynasty, inviting Pang De out of the mountain, Chinese landscape painting had already entered a new period, when artists focused more on the pleasure of painting and imitated former works.

Considering the unique painting skills and vivid style of Chinese landscape painting, there is no doubt that people from all over the world have been deeply attracted by its charm.

Grand emperor Kangxi

Emperor Kangxi (1654-1622) took the throne at the age of eight and ruled for 61 years. He was diligent, learned, and encouraged science and culture. Not only was he familiar with ancient documents and history, but also paid studied the uses of the chronometer, mathematics and geometry from western missionaries.

He also made profound political achievements during his reign. He united Taiwan, fought against Czarist Russia, personally led armies to fight G'erdan and pacified three vassal states that attempted to overthrow his regime. His great talent and bold vision brought prosperity to the country.

Even after several hundreds of years, the objects on show reveal what kind of an emperor this man was. Wood Seal with Characters of Yu De Qin Min is carved with Chinese characters reminding the emperor to be diligent and fair in order to benefit his people. Armor of Emperor Kangxi, once worn by the emperor when inspecting the army, indicates that Kangxi attached much importance to the safety of the country. The most special object is a globe, now in the collection of the Palace Museum, showing the equator, longitudes and latitudes, as well as some major cities of China and several countries in other continents.

During their long civilized history, Chinese and French peoples have created resplendent cultures respectively, making it both necessary and meaningful to exchange the relics left by ancestors of the two countries. The China-France Culture Year has set a stage big enough for the two countries of profound and thriving cultures to fully demonstrate their charm, not only to themselves, but also to the whole world.



The exhibition features a rare collection of treasures, divided into four sections covering Confucius, the Shu Kingdom, Chinese landscape painting and articles of Qing Emperor Kangxi. Photos by Tian Xiaotong

What's New

By Tom Spearman
CD

Chemical Brothers: Push the Button



Ah, at last, a return to form for the Chemical Brothers. You can hear it right from the first track, *Galvanize*. The song features an unlikely combination of the Big Beat sound the Chemicals were credited with pioneering in the 1990s, samples from Asian music and a rap by Tribe Called Quest's Q-Tip. It works amazingly well, and throbs with confidence. This comes as a relief, seeing as 2002's *Come With Us* fell so flat. That album had just two great moments on it, but while there are some duff notes here – in particular *Left Right* – there are plenty of highs. The Chemical Brothers have veered off in some new directions here, but many of the album's best moments bear a familiar sound, such as *Surface to Air*, a blissful homage to Indie darlings New Order.

DVD
Underground



Finally, a copy of one of the most essential European art-house movies of the last 20 years that has English subtitles. This admirably ambitious epic is a metaphor for postwar Yugoslavia, from World War II up to and beyond the civil war that tore the country apart in the 1990s. It deals with the subject in the only manner possible: with humor. The narrative follows the lives of two bandit nationalists scrambling for their own and their country's profit admit turbulent forces of history. The film is split up into a series of segments, the first a bizarrely comedic adventure story, before it all gradually becomes more serious. It's a clever approach, allowing you to fall in love with the characters so that their betrayals and growing enmities seem all the more harrowing as the story progresses. The neatest trick is that it seems just superficially enjoyable at the beginning but becomes so full of meaning and resonance by the end.

The Aviator

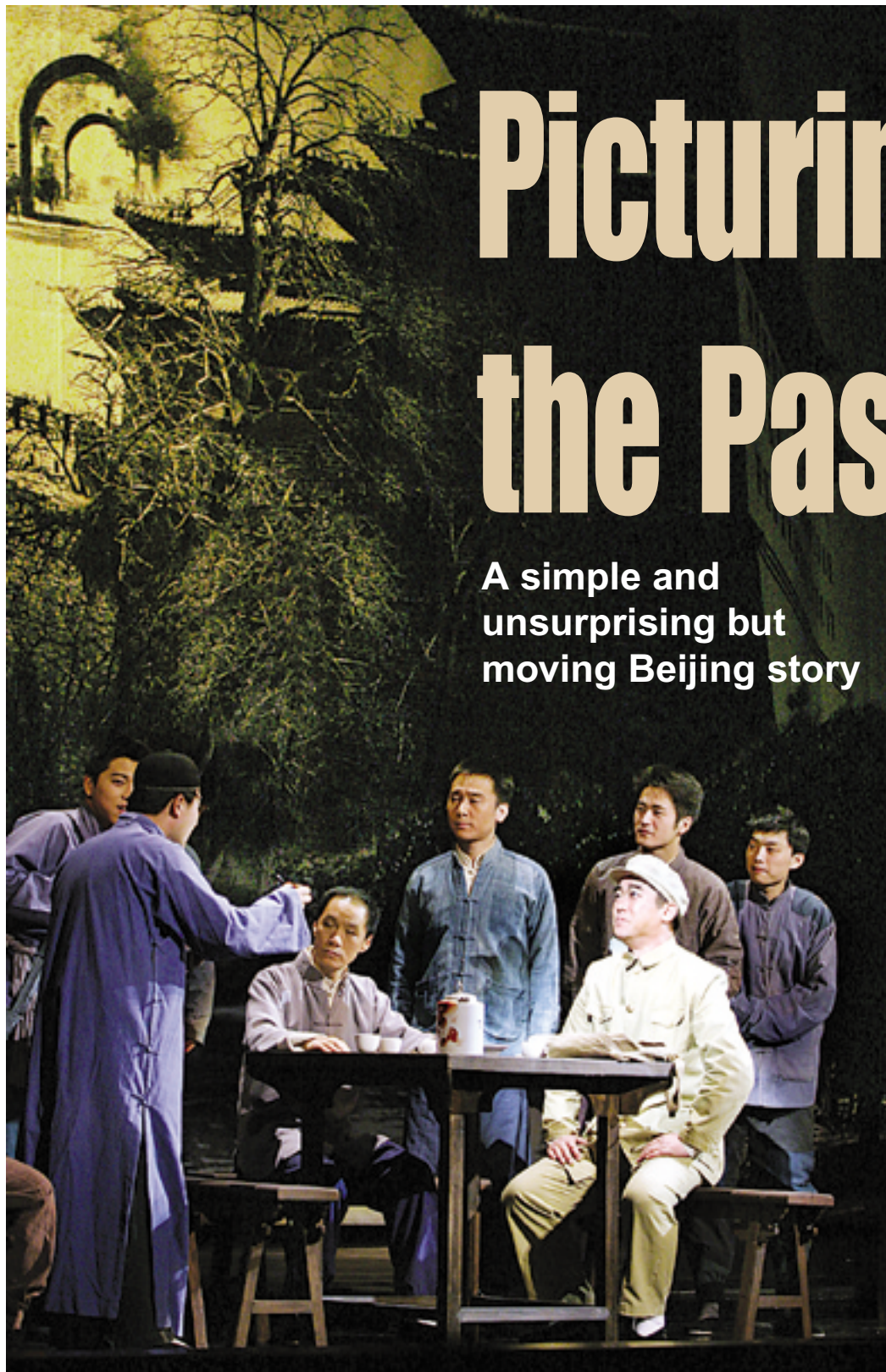


It's not easy to get beneath the skin of a character with a marked obsessive/compulsive disorder, and it proves sadly beyond the talents even of director Martin Scorsese and Leonardo DiCaprio, in the lead role as filmmaker and aviation pioneer Howard Hughes. The main problem seems to be that Scorsese identifies principally with Hughes' obsessive approach to everything: cue lovingly crafted shots of Hughes' hand gliding over a new plane, checking for imperfections. A realistic portrait it may be, but it gets a little boring. For the first two thirds of this epic movie, Hughes comes across simply as an eccentric tycoon playing with his toys. It gets more interesting in the last forty-five minutes as Hughes' battle with the entrenched interests of PanAm heats up. There are some wonderfully shot scenes, and the movie is entertaining, but DiCaprio's Hughes remains icily enigmatic to the end.



Picturing the Past

A simple and unsurprising but moving Beijing story



Photos by Tian Yufeng

By Jacqueline Yu

As you would expect from a drama produced by the Beijing People's Art Theatre, *Quan Jia Fu* (*Entire family's good fortune*) offers a strong taste of old Beijing. The setting is a traditional hutong, and the actors have strong old Beijing accents. This drama is one way for people to remember the city they used to know, as many of the old streets continue to be torn down. Directed by Ren Ming, the production runs until March 13 at Capital Theatre in Wangfujing.

Though it has a modern setting, the story was adapted from the novel of the same name of Ye Guangqin, who was born in a noble Manchurian family that was sliding into decline. Ye wrote from experience, and a close familiarity with the way things really were. She was not examining the reasons for her family's decline or the changing times; rather, her work was a natural recording of the feelings she experienced over a number of years. "Though much has been changed, the only one thing that hasn't changed is personality," she wrote.

Wang Mantang, the hero of the story, is a building repair worker. He symbolizes a person who sticks to his own beliefs and personality throughout his life. The six-act drama opens from the period shortly before the establishment of the People's Republic of China, when Wang was still in his twenties. In the following fifty years, Wang, together with his family and neighbors, experience the big events of the new state, from the dynamism of the early period of the PRC, the madness of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, the Reform and Opening Up period, the 1990s when China's economy started to take off and into the new century. It offers audiences a view of changes they've seen in their own lives, and memories of issues and problems faced by ordinary people.

Feng Yuanzheng played Wang Mantang, with Yang Guixiang as Maizi, Wang's former wife while they lived in Shandong, and Gao Qian played his present wife Daniu in Beijing. Other moving turns are provided by Zhang Yongqiang as Dr. Zhou, an army doctor who used to work for the Kuomintang, and Wang Changli as Lao Xiao, a geomancer.

The stage set designed by Zhang Qiuchun is traditional People's Art Theatre style - a very simple courtyard and exact details. At the beginning, the actors were slowly revealed, sitting in a teahouse. It was a picture of a city corner in old Beijing. The songs accompanying the changing scenes are familiar to most Chinese people, and symbolic of each period.

The Players' Folk Night

By Wang Yao

This folk night at 13 Club was a relaxed affair in which well-known musicians from six bands got to cover some of the old songs that have greatly influenced them. It also featured a bit of audience participation in the music.

The musicians were all close friends of the bar's owner Liu Lixin, who formed the power metal band Jun Xie Suo. The band was formed in 1999 and the members had some tough experiences in producing their own music at that time in Mongolia. In 2000, they moved to Beijing and their simple style and powerful performances gradually gained them a loyal following. Many fans said they were like China's Pantera, a well-known metal band in the US. Liu told *Beijing Today* that he had three reasons for setting up this night. First, his own band's vocalist Ying Peng had returned to the band and they had returned to making music. So friends wanted to gather to celebrate their new start. Second, during the Spring Festival, most listeners wanted something nostalgic and songs from their youth. Thirdly, he wanted to create an opportunity for fans who like singing to come up on stage and play with the musicians.

Tian Kai and Jin Tao from the band Huang Tong got the party started. They sang the U2 song *Stuck in a Moment You Can't Get Out of* and *Baby Face*. Then they played a new song that had not been performed before, *Chao Yue Ai* (*Surpassing Love*).

Next up were vocalist Ying Peng from Jun Xie Suo and guitarist Zhao Yu from Dao Yan. Little has been seen of Ying in the last year and his voice drew cheers from the audience. Zhao is a guitar player but here he played the darobokka, a percussion instrument from Africa. It showed off Zhao's commanding sense of rhythm. He even had different styles of playing the drum and would shift from one to the other during the song. Ying's version of *A Ma Ni* (originally sung by Hong Kong's Beyond band) was a popular number.



Liu Lixin on stage

Photo by I-Neco

Then it was the turn of Liu Lixin and Qi Youyi, who is a magazine reporter. Liu improvised on the darobokka and Qi played his guitar and sang songs by Nirvana and Oasis. Qi also sang Radiohead's version of the Oasis song *Wonderwall*. Qi says that it is easy for guitar lovers to play those two tunes, and he admitted sometimes using his guitar skills to attract girls' attention. Though he is a reporter and an amateur singer, his skills were pretty impressive.

I have heard Liu and his band's blistering snarl in their power metal, and felt the desperation in their music. But this evening, I was delighted to see another side of Liu Lixin, gentle and humorous. He played the guitar (he is the bass player in his band) and sang *Zai Hui Shou* (originally sung by Taiwan pop singer Jiang Yuheng). He poured plenty of emotion into the song, and people in the bar kept quiet and listened with respect. Then Liu, Zhao Yu and Liu Tieqiao, the saxophone player for Meihao Yaodian, performed the classic song *Let it Be* by the Beatles. They gave the song a new jazz flavor.

Dj Duan Ran of CMCB played the guitar and sang the song *Yesterday* by the Beatles, *Zhong Gu Lou* by Zhang Chu, and *Hotel California* by the Eagles. Duan's voice was powerful and he did a good job of imitating Zhang Chu's voice. From his composure and deep eyes and his low-pitched skills in processing the twists of the songs, his personality came through.

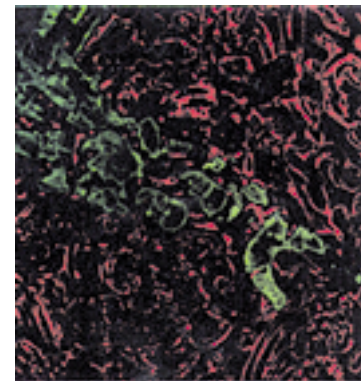
The guest singer of the night was Zhu Guangyu. This fanatic music lover is the manager of Nameless Highland bar. Liu said Zhu often creates some pieces of music and had formed some bands, accumulating lots of experience. Zhu is a modest singer but his voice and his original tunes made people forget that he is a businessman these days.

Chinese Rock CDs Review

By Wang Yao

Xiang Ye Zi Yi Yang Fei (*Glide like a Leaf*) by Fei Xu (Ruin) was issued by the Modernsky Recording Company last November. Ruin formed in the 1990s, comprising vocalist Zhou Yunshan, bass player Cao Cao, guitarist Zhou Lao'er, and drummer Chen Kun. The album includes their old songs made in Shucun, where the players lived in Beijing years ago. The band absorbs some English-style factors, but Zhou Yunshan says the music is more like rock with Chinese characteristics.

Yi Duo Ren Hua (*A Human Flower*) offers a frail-sounding voice that shows both hope for life and love, and doubts about human nature. The guitar sound is simple and somber. *Tai Pan Zhong De Yi*



Xiang (*Portrait of the Dead in Placentas*) is one of the band's best-loved songs. The name of the song is pretty heavy, and the lyrics are suitably chilling: "People die on the way to bliss." It's reminiscent of an old saying about a wise baby who dies immediately after its



first glimpse of the world. The song is also about the evils of people's pursuit of immaterial things. The tone of the song is depressing, and the bass plays a vital part, sounding like a heartbeat. The guitar adds to the effect, sounding like it's struggling for breath.

Ci Pan (*Porcelain*), is a self-titled album by a band who formed in 2001, featuring vocals and guitar by Xia Tian, percussion by Li Yanzeng and bass by Zhang Xining. One of the main themes of the music is breadth of mind. The album has a new-age sound and is full of middle-eastern and Indian flavors. The first track, *Shen Mi De Lu* (*Mysterious Road*), has a soundstage like a vanished ancient city, and the guitar uses the effects processor to imitate the flute and the Indian Tetrachord. The vocalist sings no words but something like "ya", imitating basic languages. *Tu* (*Journey*), is perhaps the highpoint of the album, relying on drum and cymbals to create an image of the desert, and dryness. The flute adds interest to the simple theme.

Demand Soars for An Education in the Arts

By Pan Hao

Even the freezing weather and the left over snow could not cool the mood of thousands of students who are eager to apply for admission to various art academies nationwide. Beijing Film Academy and the Arts Department of Beijing Normal University started accepting applications last Thursday, while Shandong's Jinan Railway Polytechnic did so Wednesday.

At 9 am Thursday, there were two ten-meter-long queues outside the arts department of Beijing Film Academy. Some students who live outside Beijing, accompanied by their parents, headed there directly from Beijing Railway Station, and there were more coming. Nearly 900 students had applied for the acting department by midday last Thursday, and by Saturday, the number had reached 6,000, some 2,000 more than last year.

It was not quiet on the campus of Beijing Normal University either. Early at 5 am, there were students queuing, despite the fact that applications would not be accepted until 8 am. Hu Jie, head of the enrollment office of Beijing Normal University told *Beijing Today* that they had finished the required applications for local students, and there were approximately 9,000 applicants for the arts academies, while the total number was expected to reach 16,000 by the time all applications from around the country had been counted.

In Jinan, capital of Shandong Province, over 146,000 applicants were lining up for the entrance exams Sunday, competing for the limited number of enrollment places, according to Monday's *Beijing Youth Daily*. In 2002, there were only 32,000.

What are the requirements?

According to Beijing Film Academy's official website, it planned to accept 683 students; 343 for degree study and 340 for higher diploma, a total of 243 more than last year. The acting department will only take 30 degree students and 150 higher diploma students.

Zhang Jiandong, a lecturer from the directing department of Beijing Film Academy and one of the academy's chief examiners, told *Beijing Today* Tuesday that over 900 students have applied for the major, of which 57 percent had passed the first round writing exam. On Thursday, the crowds of students were waiting for the second round of the written exam. "The selected ones will have to go through several rounds of interviews," Zhang told *Beijing Today*.

"For a student interested in directing, we expect them to be versatile, sociable, good communicators, team oriented, while retaining sharp and in-depth views about people and things around," Zhang said.

He also complained that most of the candidates were 17 to 18 years old, which is too young for such a position requiring both talent and experience.

"One out of a million would be lucky enough to succeed in the



Students line up in heavy snow to sit for the university entrance exam in Jinan, Shandong Province. Photos by BQB

future," Zhang stressed in the interview. "Therefore, we do hope that more mature students will apply."

The art faculty of Beijing Normal University plans to enroll 340 students, 160 for arts and 130 for music, according to Hu Jie.

"The competition is not easy, considering the number of applying students exceeding 16,000," Hu expressed his worries.

"You need to have well-developed art skills and techniques, particularly true for music and dancing," she explained. "And you need to start the training at early age and maintain your efforts throughout your life."

Problems and expert's tips

The two professors gave some comments on the unexpected demand for places in art courses this year, and cautioned the enthusiastic students.

The first and most important reason for the surge in demand is the increased levels of enrollment by the art academies, driven by the hot entertainment market, which has led many students to believe that they can make easy money.

The relatively low entry requirements also play a role. Many of the students are simply not good at the basic education and afraid they will be unable to pass the annual national college entrance test.

"They choose arts as an alternative way for further education, no matter whether they have a true affinity for this area or not," Hu complained.

"An objective and rational self-evaluation is vital in choosing your future career," Zhang added.

In addition, Hu emphasized that a fundamental knowledge of art and proper training from an early age is very important.

"Interest alone is far from enough," she said.

Seeking Employment

A swimming coach from Moldova is looking for a job in Beijing. Qualifications as: Coach/ Judge at National Standard; Olympian (Ranked 12 in the world in 1995), World Cup Silver Medallist; Experienced children's coach at all levels; Qualified driver (B, C, D, E categories), bodybuilding instructor; Proficient in Russian, English, Romanian, Ukrainian.

Contact Max Cazmirciuc at: 13126711168 or email: mcazmirciuc@yahoo.com

Web design graduates are available. For details visit: www.inhb.com, or call Liu or Tang at: 0311-1360000. Email: luogq@heinfo.net

Laid-off workers are providing PC maintenance services such as system upgrade, virus detection and removal, data copying and recovering, system utilization and security. Call: 6732 7217

Female Beijinger, 39, has a decade's experience in import-export business, human resources management, interpretation and secretarial work. I have a good command of computer skills and am good at English, both writing and speaking. Mobile: 13611163663

A retired president and CEO of two Canadian companies interested in teaching English or French in China. Cellphone: 1352 0549132, email: Jeanguyfurois@aol.com

Situations Vacant

Shangqiu Fuyuan Rubio Bio-engineering Co. in Henan Province is looking for marketing professionals, fine chemical professionals, chemical analyzers, IT software and network developers, pharmaceutical professionals and nutrition analyzers.

Web: www.fyrb.com.cn, www.hnsqfyrb.com
Tel: 0370-2268636, 13781596019

Email: renliziyuan@fyrb.com.cn

Shanghai Whyte Asia Pioneer Pharmaceutical Ltd. is looking for instrumentation and automation engineers, chemical engineers, R&D managers, chemists, microbiologists, chemical analysts, process development chemists, chemical products sourcing executives, and web masters. Contact: Mr. Zhou at: 021-6120 3156

The Jiangsu-based YOSO Electronics invites agents nationwide for its products of CD-ROMs, DVD-ROMs, COMBOs, CD-R/RWs, and DVD-R/RWs. www.yoso.com.cn. Contact: Mr. Li at 0510-271 4856, 238 8339, 13812525708

The Southern Industrial Zone, Bincheng District, Binzhou, Shandong Province, is looking for two reps and five consultants in Beijing.

Contact: Mr. Chen at 13561569235

Another Round of Job Hunting

By Pan Hao / Zhang Nan

The lunar new year has brought a spate recruiting fairs and golden opportunities for job seekers.

A spring recruiting fair was held last Saturday at Beijings National Agricultural Exhibition Center. According to *Beijing Youth Daily*, there was a 300-meter long queue outside by 10 am, and it was still 100 meters long at noon.

Another recruiting fair, aimed at graduates specializing in high-tech areas and students returned from abroad, was held at Workers Stadium last Saturday, with an attendance of some 2,000, most of whom were this year's graduates.

Similar fairs were held last weekend in Henan, attracting some 20,000 graduates. In Tianjing, a recruiting fair was held last Friday. Over 150 en-



Job seekers outside the Agricultural Exhibition Center wait for a chance to meet with prospective employers last Saturday. Photo by Tian Yufeng

terprises offered 3,000 jobs at the fair.

This weekend, three job fairs will be held in Beijing. The biggest of these, and the most attractive for job hunters is the Beijing Human Resource Mar-

ket, at China International Exhibition Center. Around 1,400 companies and enterprises will participate, including foreign enterprises, high-tech enterprises, architectural, medical care and media.

Motorola, Siemens, Intel, Panasonic, Toyota, NEC, San-yo and other major companies will participate.

Li Yiguang, of the Beijing Foreign Enterprise Service Company, said that more than 50 foreign enterprises, 18 domestic high-tech companies and more than 10 foreign companies' Beijing business affiliates were participating in the fair.

The total number of vacancies is around 5,200, with 430 for marketing sales, 278 for financial industry, 529 for computer science, and 860 for foreign languages. The total number of vacancies provided by foreign companies accounts for about 40 percent of all the vacancies.

The other two job fairs are the 2005 Spring Job Fair and the Seventh National Job Fair for Capable People.



Former HP CEO, Carly Fiorina. Photo by AFP

HP Enlists Headhunter in CEO Search

Hewlett-Packard has announced it is hiring executive search firm Russell Reynolds associates to find a new chief executive following last week's ouster of Carly Fiorina from that position.

While Russell Reynolds will manage the search, Palo Alto, California-based HP has said that the full board will be involved in the search process as well.

Patricia Dunne, non-executive chairman of HP's board, said in

a statement that the company "will not comment further until we are ready to announce our new CEO."

The board of HP, a Silicon Valley icon, last week ousted Fiorina, the architect of the controversial \$19 billion acquisition of Compaq Computer in May 2002 that never produced the results she had promised investors.

Some analysts and investors have called for the board to break

up the company by perhaps spinning off its lucrative imaging and printing business, selling its PC business, or all of its computer, computer services and software businesses.

HP faces competition on the high end of the computer and computer services market from International Business Machines Corp. and from Dell Inc. in personal computers. In 2004, HP lost the No. 1 position in the PC

market place to the fast-growing and super-efficient Dell.

Shares of HP lost more than 50 percent of their value since Fiorina was hired from Lucent Technologies in July 1999, with a mandate from HP's board to reinvigorate and streamline the Silicon Valley giant.

Shares of HP fell 5 cents to \$21.01 on the New York Stock Exchange in midafternoon trade.

(Duncan Martell / Reuters)

A Beijing-based English newspaper is looking for reporters, freelancers and editors.

Chinese applicants should have university degrees in English or related majors and media experience.

Foreigners from the UK and US with relevant media experience preferred.

Please send your resumes and writing samples to: hr@ynet.com



View of upper campus



Students relaxing on the library lawn



Orientation week activities



Splendid Australia

UNSW: University of Quality

The University of New South Wales (UNSW) was incorporated by act of the parliament of Australia's New South Wales state in Sydney in 1949, but its character and idea can be traced back to the formation of the Sydney Mechanics Institute in 1843, leading to the formation of the Sydney Technical College in 1878.

Located in Kensington, an eastern suburb of Sydney, UNSW is now one of Australia's leading international research universities. The university provides a unique mix of disciplines, innovative multi-disciplinary research programs and an outstanding learning experience to all students. Enhancing the experience of students underpins the university's approach to teaching and learning.

Christine Cox, head of the international office of UNSW, took part in "Splendid Australia", the series of online chats in *Beijing Today's* "Study Abroad Salon", early this month. She gave a well-rounded introduction to UNSW for Chinese students hoping to know more about the university.

History and strengths:

What is the history of NSW? Britons must have been the first group of settlers.

—plmm@sina.com

The state of New South Wales



Christine Cox on campus

was first settled as a penal colony of Britain in 1788 so, yes, our first settlers were from Britain and from both sides of the law. Since then Sydney, which is the capital of NSW, has developed into a very cosmopolitan city with residents coming from very culturally diverse backgrounds — the UK and Europe, Asia, South America, Africa and the Middle East, to name a few. Currently over 50 percent of Sydney residents were either born overseas or have at least one parent born overseas.

Compared with the seven other universities in the Group of Eight, what are the advantages of your university?

—JackieZhang

UNSW is a strong teaching and research university and one of the great advantages of studying at UNSW is that the research findings are incorporated in coursework programs and often students are taught by academic staff conducting research.

UNSW also has very strong links with industry, which ensures that the programs offered are relevant to industry needs.

Programs and faculties:

What are the best faculties and programs in your university?

—hostayi

UNSW is a comprehensive

teaching and research university and offers over 400 programs at bachelor, master and doctorate levels.

Our largest faculties are engineering,

science and commerce. UNSW was established in 1949 as a technological university offering engineering and science programs. As the university grew so did the programs offered and now we have faculties of arts and social sciences, college of fine arts, built environment, commerce and economics, engineering, law, medicine, science and the Australian Graduate School of Management. We also have the University College located at the Australian Defence Force Academy in Canberra, which offers a

wide range of postgraduate programs.

Chinese students:

How many Chinese students do you have? Which subjects are most popular among them?

—tears

We have over 38,000 students and about 9,000 are international students

and 900 are from China.

Arts, commerce, engineering and science are popular with Chinese students.

Application and costs:

I know IDP has offices in Beijing and Shanghai helping Chinese students with applications, but they charge a lot, nearly \$1,000, for the services. Can I apply directly to you?

—monkeyking

You are most welcome to use the UNSW on-line application. You can find this at www.apply.unsw.edu.au and it will cost only AU\$50 and you can pay by credit card.

I have been thinking of studying in Australia for years. But the problem is money. What are the average prices for undergraduate and graduate study at your university?

—monkeyking

The costs of programs at UNSW vary according to the program you want to study. For example undergraduate programs in arts will cost between AU\$16,320 and AU\$17,580, commerce AU\$18,720, engineering AU\$21,360 and science between AU\$18,840 and AU\$21,360, each year. Postgraduate study costs are very similar, however the

programs are of shorter duration. For further information on costs please visit us at www.international.unsw.edu.au.

Campus facilities:

Can you introduce your university's library? Are there any entertainment facilities or activities for students?

—black coffee

The main collection of the library contains 2.69 million items including books, newspapers, maps, and audiovisual and electronic items. It subscribes to almost 11,000 hard copy journal titles and has access to approximately 43,000 electronic journal titles. Students are able to access the library website from home.

There are four main discipline-oriented libraries in UNSW — social sciences and humanities, physical sciences, law and biomedical. The College of Fine Arts library is located at the Paddington campus and provides specialized services relating to the visual arts.

What are the conditions and costs of your dormitories?

—Thorn Bird

We have eight residential colleges at UNSW. Costs range from AU\$220 to AU\$360 per week. Colleges usually provide single study/bedrooms, shared bathrooms, two or three meals a day and bed linen. There are also two apartment-blocks and costs range from AU\$127 to AU\$144 for a single room. The apartments are usually five bedrooms, two bathrooms with shared kitchen, living room and laundry. You can find out more at www.housing.unsw.edu.au.

(Edited By Zhang Nan)

Notice

Next Monday (February 28), Monica Turvey from the International Education Directorate of the University of Queensland will take part in our Study Abroad Salon. To ask questions, you are welcome to log onto our website at: <http://bjtoday.ynet.com> or forward your questions to the host Ayi at: ayi@ynet.com.
Time: Feb. 28, 1 pm

通知

下周一，昆士兰大学国际部的 Monica Turvey 将做客“留学聊天室”，与大家就学习和生活在昆士兰进行交流。欢迎届时光临我们的网站：<http://bjtoday.ynet.com>。或者，把您的问题发送到主持人阿义的信箱：ayi@ynet.com。
时间：2月28日下午1点

Ask Ayi:

Q: My daughter will go to Holland to further study. One of my friends in Holland told me that the country has a special bus ticket called the *strippenkaart*. What is it?

—Lion-82

A: A *strippenkaart* is a kind of ticket that works for buses, trolleys and subways and uses grids. Prices depend on number of grids. A ticket with 15 grids is about 6.2 euro and one with 45 grids is around 18 euro. The more stops you take, the more grids will be marked.

Q: What kinds of scholarships are available at Australia's University of Adelaide?

—blueberry

A: Below is an introduction to two scholarships for which you may want to apply to.

The Adelaide Achiever Scholarship International (AASI): Up to 11 Adelaide Achiever Scholarships may be available to international students from any country undertaking study in any academic discipline. Benefits are payment of 50 percent of tuition fees for the normal duration of an academic program.

Partial scholarships for articulating students transferring into later years in engineering and computer science: Up to 48 scholarships are available for meritorious diploma holders from the university's articulation partners in Singapore, China, Vietnam and Malaysia who enroll in bachelor of engineering or bachelor of computer science programs at the University.

You can check the university's Web site for more information.

(Edited by Zhang Nan)

UK Visa Centers Offer More Convenience at Added Cost

By Zhang Nan

The visa facilitation services (VFS) office of the UK Visa Application Center started operation this Wednesday at East Gate Plaza in Dongcheng District.

The center is the first set up by the British Embassy in China, part of a bigger campaign to expand the UK's visa network. Later, centers in Guangzhou, Shanghai, Shenyang, Shenzhen, Wuhan, Chengdu, Chongqing, Hangzhou, Jinan, Nanjing and Fuzhou will be opened.

The center provides a convenient place for visa applicants to turn in their application materials without having to travel far and wide. However, that convenience does come at a small price.

Services at the Beijing center are provided by Beijing Shuangxiong Foreign Service Company, an established study abroad agent. They will charge an additional 220 yuan for materials management services above the basic visa application fees.

All centers will be open seven days a week. Visa applicants will be expected to hand in their applications and pay fees directly to the centers. They will then pass on the materials to the British Embassy in Beijing or regional consulates for processing and return the materials to applicants afterwards. Most applicants will not need to go through face-to-face interviews, and those that skip that step can get replies one day after turning in their materials.

US Extends Some Visas' Validity

By Zhang Nan

The US Embassy in Beijing announced the extension of validity for science-related interagency visa clearances last Wednesday.

The US State Department, in consultation with the US Department of Homeland Security, has extended the validity of visa clearances for the F (student), J (exchange visitors), H (temporary workers), L (intra-company transferees) and B (tourist and business) categories of visas.

If an original visa has expired and a new visa application is filed to return to the previous study or work program in the US, another visa mantis clearance may not be required.

International students (F visas) who have received a visa mantis clearance and been issued a visa will benefit from having that clearance be valid for up to the length of an approved academic program, to a maximum of four years.

Temporary workers (H visas), exchange visitors (J visas) and intra-company transferees (L visas) can receive clearance for up to two years.



View of lower campus

Photos provided by UNSW



Room with a View

By Chu Meng

Students, bohemians and people seeking some weekend peace have made Sculpting in Time (Diaoke Shiguang) near the Weigongcun area of Haidian District one of Beijing's premier cafes. It has been going strong for years – strong enough that management recently was able to open a new branch better suited to really getting away from it all from its perch on Maimai Jie in the Fragrant Hills.

In keeping with the location, it has a tranquil, naturally rustic feel while offering Sculpting in Time's great drinks and snacks. Inside, it feels more like a person's welcoming living room than a business, with large couches framed by homey china cabinets in the corners and Bach, Mozart and Beethoven playing over the wafting fragrance of freshly brewed espresso.

That room spills into a garden area, which is surrounded by towering trees and brick walls and staircases leading to a patio above. When the spring sun returns, an outdoor stage should be the site for al fresco performances.

Top spot on the menu's main dishes goes to the *yuan-yang* pizza, topped with two flavors of your choice, including real roast duck. Yet the premium pizza does not command premium prices, just 38 yuan for a small and 60 yuan for a larger pie. Aside from the smooth, rich cappuccino and other coffee drinks, choices for washing it down include a tempting tea selection with choices like lavender, linden and rosemary herbal teas from France or more traditional herbal blends like rose and peppermint. A generous, soothing pot costs 35 yuan.

Where: No. 50, Maimai Jie, Fragrant Hills, Haidian

Open: 11 am - 10 pm

Tel: 8259 0040

Outside Inside

By Wang Yao

Views, drinks, sun and tunes – some might say the two-storey Na Bar on Maimai Jie has it all.

The owner's recipe for relaxation is plenty of space, plants and bright Indian music in the background. The first floor has scattered tables in a large open area, but the prime spots are on the second floor, where guests can hunker down in a luxuriant greenhouse filled with plants and light with great views from all angles.

The quality atmosphere is matched by simple, well-done drinks and food. The Guangdao's Love (30 yuan) takes the basic ingredients of a Long Island Ice Tea and adds sugar, lemon juice, fruit wine and soda, resulting in a complex and very alcoholic mix. Tea-totallers will be more taken with the ginger juice milk tea (20 yuan), a warming drink great for staving off a cold.

One of the more popular food selections is braised beef rice (20 yuan), tasty and filling with welcome little grease. For something lighter, check out the reasonably priced sandwiches, salads and snacks.

Where: No.55 Maimai Jie

Open: 11 am - 1 am

Average cost: 30-50 yuan

Tel: 6259 1082



By Wang Yao

One of the most unusual and elegant dining options in the Fragrant Hills area is the Najia Xiaoyuan, or Na Family, restaurant, which is nestled opposite the beautiful Beijing Botanical Garden.

The setting is a sprawling two-storey courtyard. The top floor is arguably the best place to eat, with meals served on traditional heated *kang* beds and windows revealing fine views of the nearby hills and gardens.

While the restaurant has a homely feel, its food goes far beyond simple *jiachang* fare. The owner, a descendant of a Qing Dy-

nasty minister, trained at the famed Guibinlou restaurant and cooks up royal cuisine with a creative, slightly rustic flare.

The house special is *huangtanzi*, or "emperor's crock", a traditional stew of invigorating, select ingredients. At Najia Xiaoyuan, standard shark fins are replaced with fish lips, which are just as nutritious and taste the same, but are far less expensive. They are mixed with wild mushrooms and balanced by chicken and richer ingredients such as ham, fish and venison in a secret recipe.

Eating *huangtanzi* is a three-step process. First, you must stop and deeply inhale the complex fragrance put off by the majestic stew.

After a short sip of the broth, diners can decide whether to add a small splash of vinegar. Rice is then added to the crock and mixed in and it's time to feast.

There are many other tempting items on the menu, including *mizhi supi xia* (crisp shrimp cooked a secret way) and *tichao tongzi ji* (stir-fried spring chicken).

Where: No.29 Yikesong Street, Fragrant Hills

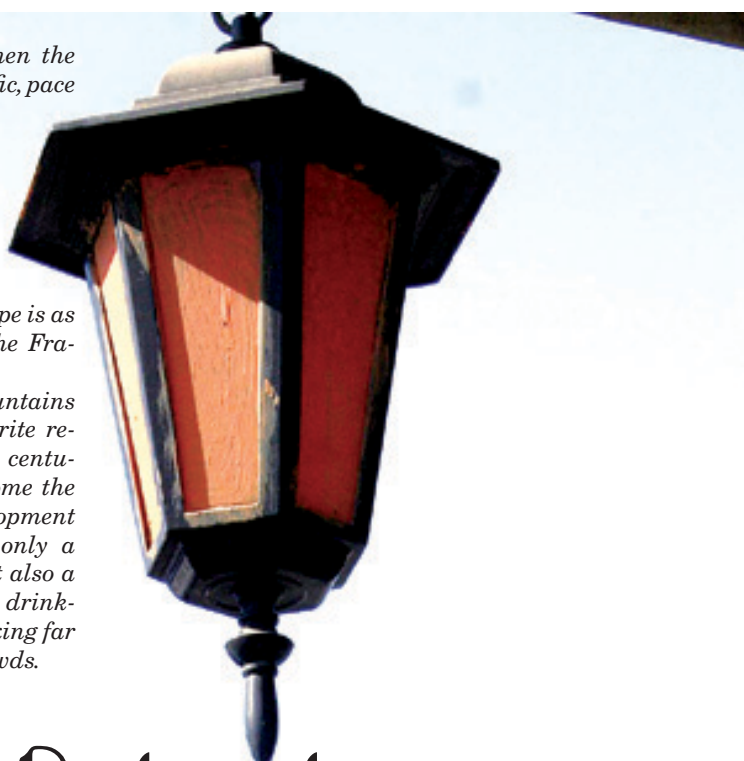
Open: 11 am - 10 pm

Average cost: 50-80 yuan

Tel: 8259 8588

There are times when the thronging masses, traffic, pace and pollution of booming Beijing can get a get much. Even on clear days, where mountains west of downtown are visible, it can be easy to forget that satisfying escape is as close as Xiangshan, the Fragrant Hills.

The quiet, low mountains that have been a favorite retreat of Beijingers for centuries have recently become the scene of cultural development that make them not only a great place to hike, but also a prime spot for dining, drinking and generally relaxing far from the madding crowds.



Tasty Retreats in the Fragrant Hills



All about the Balcony

By Annie Wei

Even for those put off by the Greek liquor for which it is named, the Ouzo Mountain Bar, hard to miss on Maimai Jie with its bright orange walls, has a lot to offer. This sprawling bar-restaurant includes a book club, wine cellar, suite rooms and a beautiful balcony.

The decor tries to run with the Greek theme with plenty of blue paint and columns, but it comes off as commercial and calculated. All is forgiven, however, with one step onto the balcony, which offers spectacular views across the rolling Fragrant Hills. It's too cold to enjoy at this point, but it's a safe bet the balcony is going to regularly pack out in warmer weather.

To wash down the views, the bar provides plenty of tippie, including an extensive wine list composed of imports from Australia, France and Italy that start at 280 per bottle. From the cocktail menu, barman Gong Enchao recommended the house specials Blue Hawaii and Fragrant Hill Sunrise. Gong kept the contents of his Aiqing Ai (Aegean Sea) secret, but did say



it tastes of coconut and orange with a blue hue to match the joint's theme.

The food menu, though written only in Chinese, contains many Western-style choices like pasta, fish and meat, cooked by a trained veteran of big hotels like Novotel who specializes in Russian and Italian fare. He recommended rolls of chicken battered, deep-fried and priced at 50 yuan. Most entrees go for a bit more, in the range of 70 yuan to 100 yuan.

Where: No. 49 Maimai Jie

Open: 11 am - 11 pm

Tel: 6259 3101



Villa Vittles

By Wang Yao

Spicy Hunan fare is the main name of the game at the Jinhai Xinyuan restaurant, but the choices hardly stop there and there's sure to be something for everyone at this large, varied establishment on Maimai Jie.

The restaurant occupies a two-storey villa that has been divided into four sections: a country teahouse, Hunan dining area, Cantonese cuisine section and open-air rooftop barbeque and beer garden. Despite the luxurious decoration, the food is priced in a wide range, from Cantonese snacks for just 12 yuan to the restorative *hongwei jiayu*, or stewed tortoise, that fetches 88 yuan per half-kilogram.

For those tired after a day hiking the hills, a good, soothing choice may be *xiangcheng baiguozhong* (12 yuan), a fruity mix of snow-berry braised inside a hollowed-out orange. The fruit emerges succulent and filled with citrusy flavor, as appealing to look at as it is to eat.

The homemade *douzhabo*, or bean sediment soup, represents a funky fusion of Hunan and old Beijing flavors cooked in a terrine. Organic beans are shipped up from the South, ground fresh upon customer order and then stewed with mild seasonings. The resulting dish is light and nutritious – perfect for people on a diet – and priced at 20 yuan.

The finishing touches are still being put on this place, but renovations should be finished in April, just in time for warm weather enjoyment.

Where: No.58 Maimai Jie

Open: 10:30 am - midnight

Average cost: 50 yuan

Tel: 6259 8001

Tea Temple

By Chu Meng

Urbanites heading to the Fragrant Hills for some real restorative quiet and fresh air would be well advised to check out Tingchanxuan, or the Hearing Cicada Teahouse, likely the most serene establishment among the several cafes, bars and restaurants in the Maimai Jie area. Splash in a dose of tangible Chinese tradition and this teahouse becomes something very special.

The top floor of the two-storey teahouse offers the most privacy and peace with enticing decor of Ming and Qing style furniture. Under the lingering notes of a zither played by a skilled musician, it is a prime setting for enjoying a slow afternoon of talk and tea served through traditional Chinese tea ceremony.

The tea menu includes a dizzying range of leaves: black, green, white, red, oolong, even yellow and floral herbal blends. The well-trained staff smoothly perform the complicated and precise art of serving tea by traditional methods and are happy to explain what they are doing in either Chinese or English.

Of course, half the pleasure of a good tea session comes from the snacks that accompany the brew, and this teahouse abides. The worthy specialty of the house are white-jade dumplings with caviar (*yuzi baiyu jiao*) that feature snowy, tender wrappers that are still strong enough to hold up to boiling and high-end seafood stuffing. All that luxury comes at a price, however, of 128 per serving. For a humbler snack, check out the eyebrow tart (*mei-mao su*) or eight-flavor nut tart (*baobao guoren su*), which go for 18 yuan a piece.

Where: Parking lot at Fragrant Hills

Open: 9 am - 8 pm

Tel: 8259 2899



Photos by Li Shuzhuan

Court of Good Taste

Personal Classifieds

Accommodation

Apartment with 1 bedroom and 1 living room in Yuetan Beijie is for rent. Quite near to ministries, commissions, and Fuwai Road subway station. US\$250 per month. Contact: Mr. Peng, 6655 6352; email: peng_john@sina.com

Language Exchange

Sara, a student at Beijing International Studies University, is looking for a native English speaking partner. Someone who is interested in traveling and Chinese culture is preferred. Contact: sasa0731@eyou.com

A young Chinese guy with a warm heart is looking for an English speaker in Beijing to share happiness and maybe something more. Contact: 13811207892; email: aniuazu@yahoo.com.cn

Miss Liu, majored in English, would like to teach and help foreign friends to learn Chinese and understand Chinese culture. Contact: 6010 4605

A Chinese man wants to find a language partner whose mother tongue is English. Contact: Chen, 13366669271

English-Chinese Tutor. English major, returned from overseas. Contact: Mr. Shao, bill51886736@126.com

Michael, a Beijing local, senior at Beijing Language and Culture University, would like to find a person whose native language is English. Contact: 8422 6902; mixture816816@hotmail.com; 13521582453 (message only)

Wanda, a postgraduate who is fluent in both spoken and written English and standard mandarin, would like to teach foreign friends Chinese on weekends. Contact: air_1999@sina.com

Professional Help

Fan Hui, a university graduate with Beijing residence, wants to find a job in the IT industry. Contact: 13323233049; email: shuimu6291@yahoo.com.cn

A versatile male in his 40s, majored in machinery with a bachelor's degree, is seeking vacancies such as assistant manager, field engineer, information processing, marketing or e-commerce. Contact Mr. Zhao, tfjc@readchina.com or byzhao@etang.com

Peggy, 27, wants to find a free-time job that may be helpful to improve her English. She can make Chinese food and has some experience of teaching Chinese. She is available on Saturday and Sunday. Contact: 13810865889, 13810758538; email: yanxing007@sohu.com

A qualified interpreter and teacher who has rich experience in the field of international finance and English and Chinese teaching is available to give practical and effective lessons to students. Contact: Jane, 13126798460; email: bear208cnen@yahoo.com.cn

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Music



Wind, Thunder & Movement! Zero Point Beijing Concert

Zero Point, an all-male band founded 15 years ago, launch their latest concert to recall the ups and downs of their musical careers. Despite gloomy periods when some of the band members quit due to issues in their private lives, the band is a team that has won respect from many fans. Many old songs will be performed, like *Love Me or Not*, *Have Enough Fun*, *Believe in Yourself*, and many of their new songs.

Where: Poly Theatre, 14 Dongzhimen Nandajie, Dongcheng **When:** 7:30 pm, March 1 and 2 **Admission:** 180-880 yuan **Tel:** 6500 1188 ext. 5126



Hongshan Culture Relics Exhibition

This exhibition features Hongshan period northern Chinese culture, including musical instruments, stone implements, jade articles, pottery and bone sculptures.

Where: China Porcelain Museum, 1 Baoguo Temple, Guang'anmennei Dajie, Xuanwu **When:** daily 9 am – 5 pm until March 20 **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8316 7326

Wan Fung Watercolors

To celebrate the Spring Festival, Wang Fung present their



collection of traditional watercolors by contemporary Chinese painters, including the works of Hu Yongkai, Yu Mingming and Fang Xiang. Most relate to the traditional themes of the Spring Festival.

Exhibitions



Spring Arrives, Flowers Open

Featuring bright swathes of color in traditional yet modern aesthetically pleasing images that inspire hope for new beginnings and other themes associated with the New Year. Works by Zhang Jianbo, Fang Xiang, Dong Ze, Zhuang Xiaolei and others.

Where: Creation Art Gallery, north end of Ritan Lu, Chaoyang **When:** daily 10:30 am – 8 pm until March 13 **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8561 7570

Movies

Zelig

Directed by Woody Allen. Fictional documentary about the life of human chameleon Leonard Zelig, a man who becomes a celebrity in the 1920s due to his ability to look and act like whoever is around him. Clever editing places Zelig in real newsreel footage of Woodrow Wilson, babe Ruth, and others.

Where: Cui Guo Bar, 100 meters north of the south gate of Jimen Li area, Haidian **When:** daily 3 pm until February 28 **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6235 9559

Zeder

Directed by Pupi Avati, starring John Stacy, Gabrele Lavia, Anne Canovas. A young writer, Stefano, gets a type-writer as an anniversary gift from his wife and decides to read what is on the ribbon. It turns out it's an essay talking about "K-zones", places where time ceases to exist and



where the dead can be brought back to life. Intrigued by this, Stefano starts to investigate the life of the former owner and soon discovers an evil cult of scientists who are trying to bring the dead back to life using K-zones.

Where: Italian Embassy, 2 Dong'erjie, Sanlitun, Chaoyang **When:** 7:30 pm, March 3 **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6532 2187

The West Lake Moment

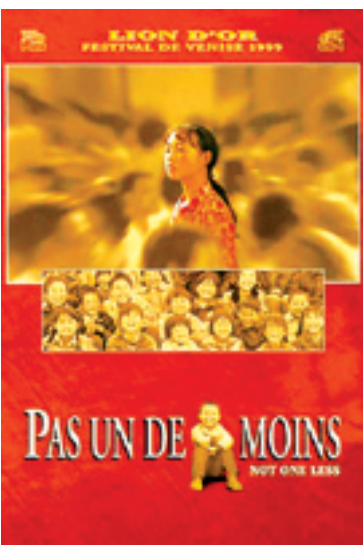
Directed by Yan Hao and Yang Zi, starring Zhou Xun and Cheng Kun. Xiao Yu is a Hangzhou cafe owner who meets Ah Tai in Beijing by accident and falls in love. Both happen to be in relationships already, but with the encouragement of her friends Xiao Yu decides to leave for Beijing – and her true love.

Where: Star City, B1/F, Oriental Plaza, 1 East Chang'an Avenue, Dongcheng **When:** until February 28 **Admission:** 70 yuan **Tel:** 8518 6778

Not One Less

Directed by Zhang Yimou, starring Wei Minzhi. Though she is barely older than her students, a teenage girl is assigned as a substitute teacher to a tiny village school. The young substitute promises that not a single child will go missing, so when one of her students goes to Beijing to make money for his debt-ridden family, the girl makes a heroic journey to the big city to try to get him back.

Where: Cherry Lane Movies Theater, 29 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang **When:** 8 pm, tonight and Saturday **Admission:** 50 yuan **Tel:** 13501251303



Jams

Zhang Chu at Yugong Yishan



As one of the more "mature" Chinese rockers around, Zhang Chu has become somewhat of a recluse of late. But for one night only he reveals whether hibernation has changed him. Special guests: Wan Xiaoli and Zhang Tie.

Where: Yugong Yishan Bar, opposite north gate of Workers' Stadium, Chaoyang **When:** 8 pm, tonight **Admission:** 80 yuan **Tel:** 6415 0687

Punk Night Sixpack
Six of Beijing's hardest and loudest take to the stage: Last Chance of Youth, Easygoing, Subs, Believers, the Unstage and Ourselves Beside Me. Be sure to stick around for the Subs' explosive live set, featuring the cathartic caterwauling of lead singer and femme fatale Kang Mao.

Where: Nameless Highland Bar, Building 14, Anhuili Area 1, Yayuncun, Chaoyang **When:** 9:30 pm, Saturday **Admission:** 30 yuan **Tel:** 6489 1613

Activities

Hike the War Tunnels

Join Beijing Hikers to trek through the war tunnels and a lost village in Pinggu County. The tunnels were built to fight guerrilla warfare with the Japanese, but the tunnels were never used, and they are there to this day. It's an interesting, slightly weird place to go on a rainy day. You can run around the narrow maze of tunnels under the village, coming up to the surface in towers, ovens and all sorts of unexpected places. **When:** Sunday, 8:30 am departure from Starbucks at Lido Hotel **Cost:** 150 yuan for adults, 100 yuan for children under 12 **Tel:** 13910025516 (Reservation essential)

The Writers Group

Have a cup of coffee and discuss your work with other Beijing writers. Meet every Sunday. Writers only; no English practice. **Contact:** chadcat@sina.com.cn, 13801326404

Tour with Chinese Culture Club (CCC): Beijing Muslim District and Mosque

This CCC tour will take you to Niujie, a largely Muslim community in Beijing's Xuanwu District. In the company of a Muslim elder and CCC English interpreter, you will visit an ancient mosque over 1,000 years old. After the tour, you can take a look at the old houses and hutongs of Beijing, a Muslim supermarket and food court or have a meal in one of the many restaurants in the area. This tour will give you a feel for the unique Muslim and old Beijing hutong atmosphere. **When:** Saturday, meet at 10 am at the entrance of the Niujie Mosque, Xuanwu **Cost:** 80 yuan (includes ticket) **Tel:** 6432 9341 (Reservation essential)

TV and Radio Highlights

HBO

25 Friday

Austin Powers in Goldmember 9 pm

26 Saturday

Freddy Vs. Jason 9 pm

27 Sunday

The Return of the King 8 pm

28 Monday

The Phantom 9 pm

1 Tuesday

Twister 10:50

2 Wednesday

Dead Calm 9 pm

3 Thursday

Trapped 11 pm

CCTV-9

Monday – Friday

Around China 6:30 am

Culture Express 8:30 am

Nature and Science /

Chinese Civilization 11:30 am

Culture Express 2:30 pm

Nature and Science /

Chinese Civilization 5:30 pm

Dialogue 7:30 pm

News Updates /

Asia Today 8 pm

Sports Scene 11:15 pm

Saturday

Travelogue 9:30 am

Center Stage 11:30 am

Sunday

Sports Weekend 10 am

Documentary 10:30 am

This Week 12:30 am

China Radio International 91.5 FM

Monday – Friday

Easy FM Afternoon 2-7 pm

Fun in Beijing 5-5:30 pm

Joy FM 9:05-11 pm

Saturday

Music Memories 8:05-11 am

Euro Hit 40 12:05-1 pm

Musique Sans Frontières 6:05-8 pm

Joy FM 9:05-11 pm

Sunday

Music Memories 8:05-11 am

Jazz Beat 6:05-8 pm

Joy FM 9:05-11 pm

We are glad to receive your feedback. We will print employment, language-exchange and accommodation information for individuals. Feel free to email us at bjtodayinfo@ynet.com or call 6590 2518

By Zhang Jianzhong

Heaven

Straddling the border of Gansu and Sichuan provinces, Langmu is a small Tibetan town that takes its name from the famous Buddhist temple there. The town was originally called Dacang Langmu, which means "the fairy in the tiger's den."

Outside

Heaven

Aba Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Sichuan Province. Embraced by mountains on two sides, rows of private houses with red roof tiles and white walls are interspersed with temples, creating an archetypal image of a traditional Chinese landscape painting.

The scenery on the two sides of the valley is quite different. In typical Gelug style, Langmusi is characterized by grand scale, flying eaves, red walls, gilded roofs and flamboyant decoration; while the Gerdi Temple in Namu, belonging to the Benbo sect, with its white walls and glazed roofs has a more austere appearance. Even the climate and vegetation vary considerably, due to the different amounts of sunlight each side receives. On the Langmusi side, the valley side slopes gently, with more grass and fewer trees, while on the Namu side, the mountains are steeper and densely wooded.

The most popular site in Langmusi is the pagoda tomb of living Buddha Saichi. As the first abbot of the temple, his body was enshrined in the pagoda after his death. Until 1958, when it was destroyed by fire, senior lamas of the temple would open the pagoda on April 15 every year to ceremonially "shave" the body, which was said to continue growing hair 200 years after the abbot had died.

Entering the main hall, visitors find themselves surrounded by Thangka (traditional Tibetan religious paintings on cloth), murals, Buddha sculptures of various sizes and countless Buddhist sutra, or scripture, rolls. In the center of the hall, lamas practice a form of debate, clapping their hands to indicate a point.

Moving clockwise through the inside of the hall and leaving from the back door, you will see a thicket of pines in the distance and a big house surrounded by walls on three sides and a wooden fence on the fourth. If you are lucky, you may find a dozen or so lamas rehearsing for a special ceremony in the temple.

The temple even makes its own yoghurt, and it is a great privilege to be invited by a lama to try some.

Dacangnamo Temple, built by the side of the river, is another famous temple on the Gansu side, and

also belongs to the Benbo sect. Along the road are lama's lodges and homes of locals. Lamas can be seen carrying water, washing vegetables and clothes. When dusk approaches, even the flow of the river seems to slow, and the sunlight casts a soft shadow on people's faces as if time has stopped and such a scene has existed for thousands of years.

The main hall of the temple is also the site of Wensi (Listening and Deliberating) College. The square outside the hall is paved with smooth stones and serves as the venue for the annual debate meeting for the students.

Leaving the temple, you will come to a huge cliff covered with Buddhist paintings and carvings. At one place is a six-word prophecy carved into the stone and painted in red, yellow and blue, each word the size of a dining table.



Photos by Huan430

Legend of a fairy

A turning on the mountain trail brings you to a water-eroded cave, called the Fairy Cave. According to legend, the place was once a den of tigers that preyed on the locals. Buddha sent a fairy to tame the tigers and then turned her into a stalactite to guard the place.

The cave has a narrow opening, through which only one person can enter at a time. Inside, the cave opens to a space the size of meeting hall. The interior is dim and damp and stalactites can be seen everywhere, with *hada* scarves of different colors tied to them (a *hada* is a silk scarf Tibetan people offer to honoured guests, lamas and gods as a sign of respect). The fairy stalactite is deep within the cave. Coins are strewn on the ground surrounding it.

Outside the cave, green mountains stretch beyond

the sky, green trees grow lushly on the mountain slope and the Bailong River narrows into a small creek, tumbling and splashing down the valley. Beside it stands a huge hay stack used as an arrow target, bristling with two meter long wooden arrows, the arrow tails are made of colorful wood chips.

If you walk upstream following the pebbled-covered riverbank, the water becomes shallower and disappears all of a sudden at the approach of a wide river valley. Here, small streams of water gush out from cracks in the stones. This is the origin of Bailong River. A total of 108 underground water sources in the valley feed the river. A colored Buddhist painting on a rock marks one of the water sources.

Modern times

Like many other cities in China, Langmusi is feeling the impact of modernization. Many of the old Tibetan style houses have been knocked down and replaced by high-rise buildings clad in cheap tiles. Heavy lorries park everywhere and anywhere, and motorcycles sweep by, startling pedestrians, the roar of their engines reverberating in the streets and raising clouds of dust that linger in the air.

Getting there:

From Lanzhou, take a bus to Hezuo, from where there are usually three buses a day to Langmusi.

Accommodation:

A hundred yards or so from where you get off the bus is an intersection where most of the hotels are located, including the Langmusi Hotel, Bailong Hotel and Renqing Hotel. They usually charge 15-20 yuan, but prices tend to go up during holidays.

Dining:

Lesha's Cafe, near the bridge leading to Langmusi, is popular with backpackers. The food is good, and the apple pie and chocolate cake are justifiably famous. Run by a young Muslim woman, Lesha's Cafe opened 10 years ago to cater to the growing numbers of foreign backpackers visiting Langmusi.

Ali Restaurant is in an inconspicuous building near Langmusi ticket office, serving pseudo western food and genuine Muslim dishes. The Muslim baked pancake is delicious when eaten hot.

Tips:

Langmusi is 3,600 meters above sea, an altitude at which people are affected by altitude sickness. Visitors should avoid any strenuous activity for the first day or two after arrival.

By Hester Xu and Arron Chang

Originally built in 1748, Langmu Temple is one of the earliest Tibetan Buddhism temples of the Gelug sect of Tibetan Buddhism in southern Gansu Province. In 1958, it was the largest monastery in the region, with 23 living Buddhas and 594 resident lamas studying and living in a dozen of temple dormitories.

The town itself is a picture of idyllic beauty, with spinning prayer wheels and the golden deer on temple roofs catching the golden sunlight, and lamas and pilgrims praying and reciting mantras. The blue sky, white clouds, red cliffs and green trees contrast with the lamas' scarlet robes, and the sound of ringing horns and chanting prayers coming from the prayer hall fills the town with a mysterious air. Wooden houses and lamas' lodgings strewn on the mountain slopes are built without apparent deliberation in their design, but are in perfect harmony against the backdrop of their surroundings.

A visit to Langmusi

The town is split in two by the Bailong (White Dragon) River. The northwest part, known as Langmusi, is in Maqu County of Gannan Autonomous Prefecture in Gansu Province. The southeast part, called Namu, is under the jurisdiction of Ru'ergerai County in the Qiang Minority

